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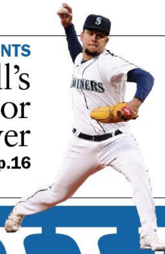

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THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

In bed with Trump

Why the GOP just can't quit the indicted ex-president

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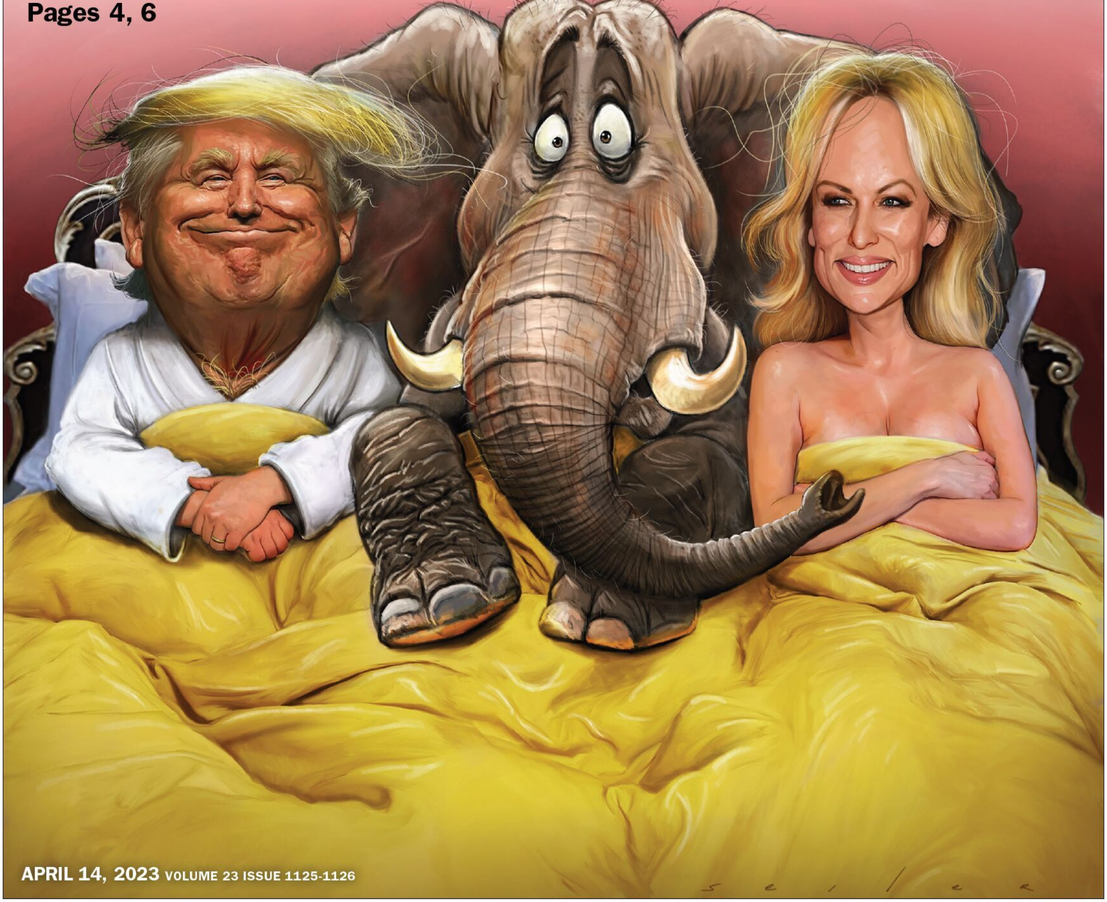

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Editor's letter

With speculation about the impact of AI reaching fever pitch in recent weeks, my son and I have been getting some firsthand experience by experimenting with ChatGPT—and the experience has been breathtaking. I know what the skeptics envision: Lost jobs. Dull and dreary AI-written white papers. And, as schools start to bring AI into their classrooms (see Technology, p.20), sad desks of kids staring into a screen, trying to learn history from a chatbot. That makes sense if your daily experience of AI is dealing with your car insurer's miserable online help feature. AI has gotten plenty of positive press, of course, but much of it has been about the abilities of the new AI tools to retrieve and summarize information. Indeed, it can do that, and the results are passable, if often workmanlike.

But ChatGPT really shines in areas that have gotten less attention. It's surprisingly good at making intuitive leaps. Ask it to describe a mythical European kingdom, and it will give you plenty of material to get your own ideas going. And it is just uncanny at solving problems that combine general knowledge with math and programming. In fourth grade, my son has been learning about the American Revolution, so we asked ChatGPT to create a game simulating the pre-Revolutionary debate. It delivered a quiz-like computer program that let you pretend you were a patriot urging revolution. My son asked ChatGPT to modify it so it's all strategy, no luck. Done, but too dry. OK, so include some silly answers and make the scoring less predictable. All done, and ready for my son to tinker with and modify as he sees fit. You've undoubtedly read about how AI makes cheating easy. Indeed it might. But watch a fourth-grader build something in minutes that could have taken days or weeks and you start to see how AI can help kids be not just more efficient but more creative. And in my book, that's a win for us humans.

Mark Gimein
Managing editor

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Research editors: Nick Gallagher, Alex Maroño Porto
Contributing editors: Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

Account director: Mary Gallagher (mary.gallagher@futurenet.com)
Media planning manager: Andrea Crino
Direct response advertising: Anthony Smyth (anthony@smythps.com)

SVP, Lifestyle, Knowledge and News: Sophie Wybrew-Bond
Managing director, news Richard Campbell
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Trump arraigned on 34 felony counts

What happened

A somber Donald Trump was arraigned this week in a Manhattan courtroom, where he pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts stemming from hush money he paid to a porn star during the 2016 campaign. As pro- and anti-Trump demonstrators squared off outside the courthouse and police and news crews flooded the streets, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg unveiled an indictment that alleged that in the run-up to the 2016 election, Trump directed his fixer Michael Cohen to make multiple payments to Stormy Daniels to keep mum about a tryst she says she had with Trump 10 years earlier. Bragg said Trump then falsified business records to indicate the repayments he made to Cohen were for legal fees, a falsehood that Bragg said violated federal and state election laws and tax laws, thus elevating the misdemeanor false-records charges to felonies. "We cannot and will not normalize serious criminal conduct," Bragg said at a press conference.

. Donald J. Trump
0 hush money payment
falsifying business records:
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Business Records in the
First Degree

Bragg explaining the indictment

Trump was grim and largely silent throughout the arraignment. He is "absolutely frustrated and upset," said his attorney Todd Blanche. After prosecutors cited a Trump social media post that showed him holding a baseball bat next to an image of Bragg, Judge Juan Merchan directed Trump to refrain from "statements that are likely to incite violence or civil unrest." Back home in Florida just hours later, Trump lashed out at both Bragg and Merchan and members of their families; Eric and Donald Trump Jr. named Merchan's daughter online, posted her photo, and said she had worked for the Biden-Harris campaign. "I have a Trump-hating judge with a Trump-hating wife and family," Trump said. "I never thought anything like this could happen in America."

Republicans circled their wagons around Trump, and echoed his claim that the prosecution is political. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy accused Bragg of an "unprecedented abuse of power," and even Sen. Mitt Romney, a frequent Trump critic, said Bragg's "overreach sets a dangerous precedent for criminalizing political opponents."

What the editorials said

The first-ever indictment of an ex-president underlines the sacred principle that "no one is above the law," said ***The Philadelphia Inquirer***. A tryst with a porn star "may seem trivial," but "buying Stormy Daniels' silence may have changed the course of history." That hush-money payoff occurred just days after the release of the *Access Hollywood* tape in which Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women. A second scandal involving a porn star "could have altered the outcome of the 2016 election," in which Trump narrowly won three swing states by only a combined 80,000 votes.

This is a dark moment for America, said ***The Wall Street Journal***. "Bragg is busting a political norm that has stood for 230 years," with a case that never should have been brought. Prosecuting a former president requires "a serious offense," not a flimsy case that wouldn't have been brought "against any defendant not named Donald Trump."

What the columnists said

Bragg's case looks like "a mistake both legally and politically," said election-law expert **Richard L. Hasen** in ***Slate***. Federal prosecutors should have charged Trump with a campaign-finance crime in 2018, when they jailed Cohen for paying Daniels. But they didn't, reportedly because then–Attorney General Bill Barr told them to drop the case. It's a far weaker case for Bragg, who has to yoke a state misdemeanor charge to a federal offense he has no jurisdiction over. These charges may be "tossed for legal insufficiency."

This "nakedly political" prosecution sets a dangerous precedent, said **Ramesh Ponnuru** in ***The Washington Post***. If Trump is brought down by a Democratic prosecutor on such questionable charges, it'll open the door to "more dubious prosecutions" of current and former officeholders. Prosecutors "in deep-red jurisdictions can be just as creative as those in New York," and now that the gloves are off, red-state voters may demand it.

"There's nothing novel or weak about this case," said **Karen Friedman Agnifilo** and **Norman Eisen** in ***The New York Times***. Bragg and his team have deep experience prosecuting complex white-collar cases in Manhattan, and falsified financial records are their "bread and butter." The judge and jury will ultimately decide whether campaign-finance laws were violated, but in similar cases prosecuted by Bragg's office, "the answer has usually been a guilty verdict."

Whatever the outcome of these charges, "Trump's decades of evading accountability are coming to an end," said **Stephen Collinson** in ***CNN.com***. More-serious cases are gaining force, including probes into his refusal to turn over classified documents, his role in the Jan. 6 uprising and fake-electors scheme, and his bid to overturn the 2020 election results in Georgia. For Trump, "an extraordinary storm" is gathering. After a lifetime of bending the world to his own reality, he's now at the mercy of a "legal system he can't control."

What next?

"*The People of New York v. Donald Trump* is only just beginning," said **Laura Jarrett** in ***NBCNews.com***. Judge Juan Merchan has set Trump's next court date for Dec. 4, and prosecutors have asked for a trial next January, a month before candidate Trump will face the Iowa caucuses. That trial date is likely to be pushed back, said **Nik Popli** in ***Time***. Trump's lengthy record as a defendant suggests his lawyers will use "a litany of hard-hitting motions and delay tactics" to "delay and prolong the proceedings as long as possible." They may petition to move the case to federal court, arguing that some payments "took place while Trump was president." They could seek to have the indictment reduced to a misdemeanor charge, or argue that the case is outside the five-year statute of limitations New York sets for most felonies. Such motions "could take months to resolve." Given the delay potential, "the case could easily go beyond the 2024 election," said former federal prosecutor Kim Wehle.

Getty

Illustration by Jason Seiler.
Cover photos from Reuters, Getty (2)

Global outcry follows Russia's arrest of U.S. journalist

Gershkovich leaving a Moscow court

What happened

Secretary of State Antony Blinken this week demanded the release of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich, detained in Russia on charges of espionage, in a call to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Federal Security Service agents arrested Gershkovich in Yekaterinburg, a defense industry hub, last week. If convicted—a near certainty in Russia's courts—he could be sentenced to 20 years in a penal colony. Russia has not presented any evidence against Gershkovich, who has been denied U.S. consular assistance. The U.S. strongly denied that Gershkovich had worked for the U.S. government, and Blinken said there is "no doubt" he has been wrongfully detained.

Gershkovich was one of the few Western correspondents remaining in Russia, which has systematically threatened reporters whose work departs from the Kremlin's Ukraine narrative, and his arrest sparked global condemnation. Before the arrest, Gershkovich had been reporting on a tank manufacturer and on the Wagner Group, the private army that has recruited shock troops for Ukraine. Russia may hope to use Gershkovich as a bargaining chip in a trade. The U.S. recently charged Sergey Cherkasov with spying for the Kremlin in Washington, D.C., and Russia has been trying to gain the release of Vadim Krasikov, a Russian assassin held in a German prison.

What the columnists said

Russia's "stunningly provocative" seizure of Gershkovich is "one of the most brazen attacks on press freedom anywhere in years," said **Anton Troianovski** in ***The New York Times***. Not since the Soviet Union's 1986 entrapment of Nicholas Daniloff have the country's forces arrested an American journalist on espionage charges. It suggests that Vladimir Putin's regime has deepened its isolation and paranoia. Even in the war's early months, "the Kremlin still sought to keep a door open for Western news outlets" to counter criticism. No longer.

What happened to Gershkovich "could not have been authorized" without Putin's say-so, said **Anna Nemtsova** in ***The Atlantic***. He has delivered "knowledgeable reporting" on Putin's inner circle. That, plus being the son of Soviet Jewish refugees in a country whose security services view such people as traitors, put him in harm's way. A December article he co-authored revealing that a top Putin aide, Nikolai Patrushev, was doctoring battlefield reports may have been the tipping point. Now Gershkovich languishes in Moscow's Lefortovo Prison, where victims of Stalin's purges were tortured and shot.

"It's fair to ask why Putin believes he can snatch Americans and come out ahead," said ***The Wall Street Journal*** in an editorial. The arrest of our colleague came nearly four months after Russia freed WNBA player Brittney Griner in exchange for arms dealer Viktor Bout—a prisoner swap "widely perceived as favoring Moscow." The Biden administration must step up. "Expelling Russia's ambassador to the U.S., as well as all Russian journalists working here, would be the minimum to expect." We cannot allow the "thuggish leaders" of hostile countries to "arrest and imprison Americans with impunity."

A progressive victory in Wisconsin

What happened

In a decisive victory that could have national ramifications for abortion and the 2024 presidential election, liberal Janet Protasiewicz this week defeated conservative Daniel Kelly for a swing seat on Wisconsin's state Supreme Court. Protasiewicz, a Milwaukee County judge, won 55.5 percent of votes, trouncing Kelly, a former state Supreme Court justice, by more than 10 points. The result gives liberals a 4-3 majority on the court. Protasiewicz heavily emphasized her opposition to partisan gerrymandering and her support for abortion rights in what was the most expensive judicial campaign in U.S. history, with Democrats and Republicans pouring $40 million into the race. Abortion has been illegal in almost all cases in Wisconsin since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year and an 1849 ban went into effect. Kelly has provided legal counsel for Wisconsin Right to Life and was endorsed by President Trump in 2020, when Wisconsin's conservative-leaning Supreme Court came within one vote of overturning Joe Biden's victory in the state. In defeat, Kelly said he wished he could "concede to a worthy opponent, but I do not have a worthy opponent."

Democrats viewed the election as a turning point enabling them to undo a decade of Republican control of the swing state. Although Gov. Tony Evers is a Democrat, his power has been curtailed by a GOP-dominated legislature that has benefited from the most gerrymandered districts in the country. Protasiewicz will help determine the future of redistricting in a state critical to Democrats' hopes in the 2024 presidential election. "The reason I decided to run was really very simple," she said. "I thought our democracy was in peril."

What the columnists said

Protasiewicz's surprisingly easy victory in a 50-50 state "marks a massive change in Wisconsin's political landscape," said **Henry Redman** in the ***Wisconsin Examiner***. She "explicitly told voters" that "women should have the right to an abortion" and that the state's political maps are "rigged." She also painted Kelly as an extremist whose anti-abortion views made him unfit for the court.

This election was critical "to the future of American democracy," said **Robert Reich** in ***The Guardian***. The extreme gerrymandering that's enabled Republicans to hold two-thirds of seats in the state legislature are now likely to be challenged in court. But Republican Dan Knodl won an open Senate seat in a special election this week, giving Republicans a supermajority that could allow them to impeach Protasiewicz and Evers. "This is how authoritarian minorities steal democracies."

Still, this was "the most consequential election of 2023," said **Ronald Brownstein** in ***The Atlantic***. The results suggest that support for legal abortion "has accelerated the recoil from the Trump-era GOP that is already evident among college-educated suburban voters." That doesn't bode well "for anti-abortion Republican presidential candidates in 2024."

AP

Controversy of the week

Trump's indictment: What it means for the GOP

For a normal politician, criminal charges would be a disaster. But for Donald Trump, said **Elizabeth Nolan Brown** in ***Reason***, this week's indictment and arraignment in Manhattan could be "just the jolt his so-far-lackluster 2024 presidential campaign needs." With new evidence that he and his followers are persecuted victims of the liberal elite, he raised $8 million in new contributions within days. Post-indictment national polls show a widening of his double-digit lead over Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, so far his only plausible challenger for the Republican nomination. Knowing the MAGA base would rally around Trump, spineless GOP leaders in Congress fell "all over themselves to air their indignation" at the indictment, said **Molly Ball** in ***Time***. More consequentially, so did Trump's likely rivals in the primary: Nikki Haley, Mike Pence, and DeSantis himself—each of whom had started offering tepid criticisms of Trump's erratic leadership. But his victimhood has reaffirmed his hold on the GOP, and "the 2024 primary could be over before it has even begun."

Trump in court: A jolt for his campaign?

"But why?" asked **Noah Rothman** in ***National Review***. I understand the "emotional reasoning" of Republicans rallying to Trump, given the flimsiness of the New York case. But what does it "gain Republican voters in material terms to renominate Trump?" We're talking about a deeply flawed candidate who decisively lost the 2020 election and whose extremist MAGA candidates cost the GOP many winnable seats in the 2022 midterms. Even before this indictment, 61 percent of Americans polled said they didn't want Trump as president again—and he is very likely to soon face more-serious charges over his 2020 election interference and the classified documents he took to Mar-a-Lago. The Manhattan indictment has given Trump one good week, said **Ross Douthat** in ***The New York Times***. Over time, though, the "sheer mess" of multiple indictments and trials may force even some of his fans to dump Trump in favor of DeSantis' tidy competence.

It's an open secret that GOP leaders view Trump as an "orange albatross," said **Mark Leibovich** in ***The Atlantic***. So why don't these leaders—and Trump's rivals for the nomination—just come out and say: As legally questionable as this indictment might be, the Republican Party should not be led by a "serial liar" who pays "hush money to porn stars?" Republicans no longer have either principles or courage, said **Jonathan V. Last** in ***The Bulwark***. For the past five years, Republican elites who secretly loathe Trump "have chosen to lie to their voters," and now they're "hostages" to his popularity with their base. So between now and 2024, the "dominant story" in right-wing media will be the legal persecution of the "innocent" Trump by "evil" Democrats. Any Republican who questions that message will be shunned as a traitor.

Don't be so sure, said **Amanda Marcotte** in ***Salon***. Trump electrified MAGA rallies by portraying himself as the "authoritarian savior" of white America, with "a fascist's contempt for rule of law and democracy." But when the bully gets punched in the nose, and does nothing but "whine about his problems" for the next two years, the sheer tedium of his narcissistic self-pity makes him look weak—and even worse, boring. Trump always had this "crybaby act" in his repertoire, but as the indictments pile up, it's about to be the whole show. His central 2024 campaign theme will be "No one has suffered more than Donald J. Trump." That's not a winning message.

Only in America

- New York City will no longer refer to restrooms in public parks as "comfort stations," to avoid any association with the "comfort women" forced into sexual slavery by Japanese troops in World War II. Park officials said the change to "restrooms" was part of a "conscious effort to champion and support human dignity."
- The Davis County, Utah, school district is reviewing the Bible to see if it violates a new state law banning "inappropriate content" from school libraries. An anonymous parent complained that the Bible is "one of the most sex-ridden books around," containing references to "incest, onanism, bestiality, prostitution, genital mutilation, fellatio, dildos, rape, and even infanticide." A district spokesman said, "We don't differentiate between one request and another."

Good week for:

Cities, with new Census Bureau data indicating that the pandemic-era exodus from major U.S. cities to the suburbs may have slowed and even reversed. Dallas County, Texas and Manhattan both gained residents after several years of net losses.

NBA players, who may now use marijuana without fear of punishment from the league. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said the move reflects society's changing laws and attitude about cannabis, as well as "the pressures and stress" that players are under.

Planting the seed, after vocational colleges in China, concerned about the nation's declining marriage and birth rates, are giving students an extra week off with explicit instructions to "feel the beauty of spring" and "go fall in love."

Bad week for:

Hospitality, with Amsterdam tourist officials launching a new campaign aimed at persuading young British men not to visit the Dutch city. City residents say they've had enough of drunken Brits urinating in public, vomiting into canals, and engaging in wild brawls.

Jurassic pork, after Vow, the lab-grown meat startup, unveiled a large "meatball" grown from the DNA of long-extinct woolly mammoths. No one has yet sampled the mammoth meat, said Vow founder Tim Noakesmith, "but that doesn't mean that you can't."

Fifth chances, after media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, 92, called off his engagement to Ann Lesley Smith, 66. A source tells *Vanity Fair* that Murdoch, who's been divorced four times, was "increasingly uncomfortable with Smith's outspoken evangelical views."

In other news

Millions to lose Medicaid coverage

An estimated 15 million people will lose Medicaid coverage in coming months, after a policy expired last week that protected coverage for low-income people during the pandemic. Under the emergency provision, passed by Congress in 2020, states received federal funding in exchange for suspending the process of re-evaluating who's eligible for Medicaid, a federal-state program that, along with the Children's Health Insurance Program, covers 92 million Americans. Five states—Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, New Hampshire, and South Dakota—will begin kicking people off Medicaid this month, while other states are likely to take up to a year to review what one official called "a tsunami" of recertification applications.

Getty

The U.S. at a glance...

Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.

Yes, it was spying.

Spy balloon: The Chinese spy balloon that flew across the U.S. in February was able to collect intelligence signals and imagery from American military sites and send the information back to Beijing in real time, NBC News reported this week. U.S. officials believe the intelligence collected was mostly from electronic signals, which could have been intercepted from weapons systems or base personnel. The balloon passed over several sensitive military sites, including the Montana base where the U.S. stores some nuclear assets, before President Biden ordered it shot down off the coast of South Carolina. The Defense Department said whatever intelligence the balloon collected had "limited additive value" because military sites had time to conceal sensitive information as the balloon approached, and because China already scrutinizes these areas with spy satellites. China has claimed the balloon was an unmanned civilian airship that strayed off course.

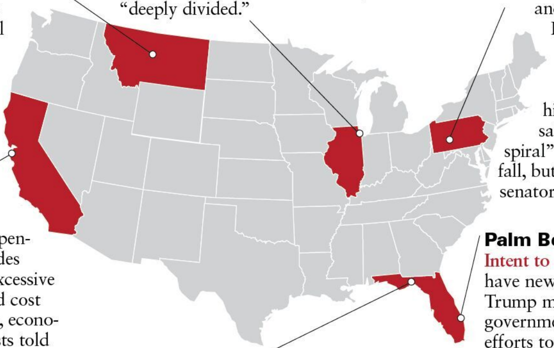
San Francisco

Calling for reparations

Reparations: A proposal to compensate Black Californians for decades of housing discrimination and excessive policing and incarceration would cost the state more than $800 billion, economists told a panel last week. That estimate is 2.5 times California's annual budget, and doesn't include a proposal to give $1 million to every older Black resident for life-shortening health disparities. In 2020, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom created a task force to consider reparations options. The cost "is going to be a real hurdle," said state Sen. Steven Bradford, a Black Democrat. Black residents of neighborhoods that experienced redlining and aggressive anti-drug policing from 1970 to 2020 would each receive $125,000, while residents from 1933 to 1970 of areas that experienced redlining would be eligible for $223,000 each. San Francisco is also considering a payment of $5 million to each eligible Black resident to atone for institutional racism.

Chicago

Squeaker: Progressive Democrat Brandon Johnson was elected Chicago's next mayor this week, narrowly winning a run-off against conservative Democrat Paul Vallas, who had promised to hire more police officers. Johnson, 47, disowned past calls to defund the police but said he supports a more "holistic approach to public safety." He's considered to the left of Mayor Lori Lightfoot—ousted after a single term—and drew support from the Chicago's Democratic Socialist councilmembers. A county commissioner and teachers union organizer, Johnson called for raising taxes on the wealthy and was considered the underdog against Vallas, a former Chicago Public Schools CEO and the race's only white candidate. Johnson said his election would usher in "the resurrection of the city of Chicago," while Vallas said the close results indicate that the city remains "deeply divided."



Tallahassee

Concealed carry: Florida this week became the 26th state to allow concealed carry of a firearm without a permit, after Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis urged the GOP-controlled legislature to go further and allow permitless open carry. Previously, Floridians needed to pass a background check and complete training courses to carry a concealed gun, and nearly 3 million people in the state have such a permit. Floridians without a permit will still be required to complete a background check and a three-day waiting period to buy a gun from a licensed dealer, but those steps are not required for private transactions. DeSantis touted the law on his book tour as he prepares for an all-but-certain presidential bid. The Biden administration criticized him for signing the law just a week after six people were shot dead at a Nashville elementary school. A recent poll found that only 21 percent of Floridians support permitless concealed carry.

Braddock, Pa.

Feeling better

Returning to the Senate: Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) was released from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center last week after more than a month of inpatient treatment for severe depression, and announced plans to return to the Senate later this month. His doctor said that after arriving in Washington suffering from disabilities caused by a stroke, the 6-foot-8 freshman senator had displayed low energy and motivation, feelings of guilt and worthlessness, and had stopped eating and drinking. The doctor said Fetterman's depression was now in remission, thanks to treatment and medication. Hearing loss may have slowed Fetterman's recovery, the doctor said, and he was fitted for hearing aids. Fetterman, 53, has struggled to process oral speech, and has used a closed-captioning device to understand what is said to him. In an interview, Fetterman said he experienced "a downward spiral" after winning his election last fall, but now hoped to be "the kind of senator that Pennsylvania deserves."

Palm Beach, Fla.

The Mar-a-Lago seizure

Intent to obstruct: Federal investigators have new evidence that former President Trump may have deliberately obstructed government efforts to retrieve sensitive records that Trump took from the White House to his Mar-a-Lago estate, *The Washington Post* reported this week. Special counsel Jack Smith has called dozens of people to testify before a Washington grand jury, and has also obtained text messages from a former Trump aide. The new evidence indicates that Trump refused for a year to heed his advisers' pleas that he turn over the documents; after he received a subpoena, he allegedly searched through boxes of documents for those he wanted to keep. More than 100 classified documents were found in a subsequent FBI search, including nuclear secrets and highly sensitive information about U.S. intelligence efforts aimed at China. On Fox News last week, Trump falsely claimed that he had "the right to take stuff."

Reuters, Getty, AP, Getty

The world at a glance...

Searching for bodies

St. Lawrence River, Canada

Deadly crossing: Eight people died this week trying to cross the St. Lawrence River from Canada into the United States. The victims, presumed to have boarded a small boat, included two young children with Canadian passports. Their parents, 28-year-old Romanians Florin Iordache and Cristina (Monalisa) Zenaida Iordache, also died. Investigators said Canada had just denied Florin Iordache's asylum application. Four more victims came from an Indian family that had recently immigrated to Canada. The families' screams for help prompted a frantic search; the bodies were found in a marsh in the Akwesasne Mohawk community on the U.S.-Canada border. The alleged smuggler, a local, remained missing. The deaths came days after the U.S. and Canada agreed to tighten border restrictions.

No longer welcome

Paris

Banning e-scooters: Parisians voted overwhelmingly this week to ban rentals of e-scooters in the French capital. Private companies started offering the scooters, or *trottinettes*, at self-service pickup points five years ago. Careening riders and a surge of accidents—with nearly 500 injuries last year—turned locals against them. At least 27 deaths were blamed on the scooters in 2022, up from seven in 2020. "Paris has become a sort of anarchy," said Paris teacher Suzon Lambert. With just 8 percent of eligible voters participating, a ban gained 89 percent support. The city won't renew contracts with three scooter companies that each have about 5,000 of the vehicles on Paris streets.

Podgorica, Montenegro

End of a reign: Montenegro voters this week ousted President Milo Djukanovic, who has run the country since the time of the former Yugoslav republic in the early 1990s. Over three decades in power, including two terms as president and seven as prime minister, Djukanovic transformed himself from a pro-Serbian communist to a pro-Western socialist. He lost in a runoff to Jakov Milatovic, a 37-year-old banker who entered politics as economy minister two years ago. Milatovic ran promising to root out corruption and accelerate talks to bring the Balkan nation of 620,000—a newly minted NATO member—into the European Union. Celebrating his victory Milatovic, who won with 60 percent of the vote, called Djukanovic "one of the last dictators in Europe."

Djukanovic

Brasília

Bolsonaro returns: Brazil's ex-president, Jair Bolsonaro, flew back to Brasília this week, ending three months of self-imposed exile in Florida. Bolsanaro left the South American country after losing his bid for reelection to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. He left the day before Lula's inauguration, avoiding having to hand over the presidential sash personally to his leftist successor. While Bolsonaro was in Florida, a mob of his supporters stormed Brazil's Congress, and diehard fans draped in Brazilian flags welcomed Bolsonaro at Brasília's international airport, but supporters were outnumbered by police. While Bolsonaro said he plans to lead the opposition to Lula, he faces 20 investigations, six of them criminal, and may lose the right to run again in 2026.

Bolsonaro

Helsinki

Finland joins NATO: Finland formally joined NATO this week, becoming the Western military alliance's 31st member and doubling its border with Russia. Finland and Sweden applied to join last year, after Russia invaded Ukraine. Sweden's bid is stuck, as Turkey accuses Stockholm of supporting Kurdish militants. Russian warned it would strengthen its "military potential" on its 800-mile border with Finland if NATO deploys forces there. Finland was twice invaded by Russia in the 20th century, and for decades followed a policy of neutrality to avoid antagonizing its larger neighbor. James Stavridis, a retired four-star American admiral and former NATO commander, called Finland's ascension "a huge plus for NATO." Finland has just 23,000 active-duty military personnel but can mobilize up to 280,000 in wartime.

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Press crackdown: Burkina Faso this week expelled two French journalists, Sophie Douce of *Le Monde* and Agnès Faivre of *Libération*. The expulsions came after *Libération* published its investigation into a video that showed children apparently executed in a military barracks, their bodies lying on the ground flanked by men wearing fatigues. The military denied responsibility for the killings. The majority-Muslim country went through two military coups last year by officers vowing to stamp out ISIS- and al Qaida–linked insurgencies. Last week, Burkina Faso also suspended all broadcasts by France 24 after the news channel aired an interview with the head of al Qaida in North Africa. Prominent human rights activist Daouda Diallo said the military is doing "irreparable damage" to press freedom.

Faivre (l.) and Douce

AP, Getty (3), Twitter (2)

The world at a glance…

Marin

Helsinki

Marin ousted: Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin lost her bid for a second term this week as the Right surged in a close three-way election focused on the economy. Marin, 37, was the world's youngest sitting prime minister, with rock-star status on the world stage. She received praise at home and abroad for leading Finland's pivot toward NATO, as well as her handling of the pandemic. Marin weathered attacks from rivals over leaked videos of her dancing and images of guests posing topless at a party at her residence. But she was done in by Finland's rising debt and inflation. The pro-business National Coalition Party, led by Petteri Orpo, beat the right-wing populist Finns and Marin's center-left Social Democrats by less than 1 percent of the vote, promising to "fix Finland."

Kyiv

Orthodox schism: A Kyiv court last week ordered a leading Orthodox priest, Metropolitan Pavlo, to be placed under house arrest for condoning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Pavlo denied making statements justifying Russia's aggression. Pavlo is the abbot of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery, Ukraine's most revered Orthodox site. Since the start of the war, Ukrainian Orthodox priests have split into two branches; Pavlo's branch reportedly maintains links with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) searched Pavlo's home, and said on the Telegram messaging service that he had "repeatedly insulted the religious feelings of Ukrainians." The SBU posted what it said was an intercepted phone conversation on YouTube in which a voice said to be Pavlo's said people were "happy" about the Russian occupation of Kherson.

Metropolitan Pavlo

Getty (3), Reuters (2)

St. Petersburg, Russia

A Tatarsky memorial

Assassinated: An explosion this week killed Russian military blogger Vladlen Tatarsky in a St. Petersburg café. Tatarsky, whose real name was Maxim Fomin, was a former separatist fighter in Russian-occupied Donetsk well-known for his pro-war posts. Police arrested antiwar protester Darya Tryopova, 26, and accused her of posing as an admirer and delivering the bomb hidden in a bust of Tatarsky. Russia released a video in which Tryopova, under apparent duress, said she "brought there the statuette that exploded." Russia accused Ukraine of planning the blast, while Ukraine attributed Tatarsky's murder to infighting in Russia. "Spiders are eating each other in a jar," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

Li Tie

Beijing

Soccer corruption: A team of China's top sporting officials moved this week to take over operations of the Chinese Football Association in a crackdown on corruption in the country's soccer league. The scandal has set back President Xi Jinping's goal of turning China into a global soccer powerhouse, and the takeover marks a ramping up of a massive corruption investigation. Anti-corruption officials in the ruling Communist Party are investigating eight current and former soccer association officials, including Du Zhaocai, deputy head of the sports administration, and Li Tie, who played in the English Premier League and is the former coach of the men's national team. The charges come as China sees its soccer ambitions frustrated, with teams shutting down and top foreign players leaving the country.

Shandiz, Iran

The assault, captured on video

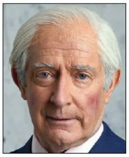
Hijab arrests: Two women attacked on video for not wearing the hijab were arrested this week, with Iran's religious ministry reiterating that "the hijab is an unquestionable religious necessity." The widely circulated video shows a man in a store berating the women in a food shop, then picking up a tub of yogurt and throwing it over their heads before the shopkeeper shoves him out. The incident came after months of unrest following the death of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, in custody after she was detained by morality police for wearing her hijab improperly. The man who attacked the women was charged with "committing an insulting act," but religious authorities appeared to tacitly endorse his actions, urging Iranians to confront women not wearing the hijab.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Death penalty limits: Malaysian lawmakers this week voted to end the country's mandatory death penalty for 11 crimes, saying it hadn't had the deterrent effect supporters had hoped. The decision, which came after a five-year moratorium, could spare more than 1,300 death-row inmates who now have 90 days to request a review of their sentences. The vote removed mandatory capital sentences and eliminated execution as an option for crimes that don't result in death, including gun trafficking and kidnapping. Amendments established alternative punishments, including whipping and up to 40 years in prison. Judges can still sentence people to death for extreme crimes like murder and terrorism. The change counters a trend elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Singapore last year executed 11 people for drug offenses, and Myanmar's military put four anti-junta activists to death.

People

A King Charles impersonator's new popularity



Charles Haslett spent decades waiting for King Charles III's turn on the throne, said Jenny Gross in *The New York Times*. Haslett, 66, is a longtime impersonator of Queen Elizabeth II's eldest son, who was first in line to the throne for longer than anyone in the history of the British monarchy. For years, impersonators of the queen got far more bookings than he did. "None of these queens had any talent," he says. "It was very frustrating." When Elizabeth died last year, he felt a wave of grief—but knew his own life would change along with Charles'. "I felt a weight of responsibility," Haslett says. "The time has come." His impersonation business is now booming, with invitations to appear at corporate events, fundraisers, and family gatherings. He invested about $6,200 "getting myself to be more kinglike than I was," Haslett says. That included buying a custom gray toupee, two double-breasted suits, a gold signet ring, and modeling clay to make his ears stick out like the king's. He'll never have a better test of his mimicry than he did 24 years ago, when he was hired to appear at an event for Charles' 50th birthday. Backstage, Haslett approached the real prince. "You're just here to get information for your act, aren't you?" Charles asked. Haslett replied, "Yes sir, exactly."

Perez's Hollywood humiliation

Rosie Perez is still frustrated by how Hollywood depicts Latinos, said Tatiana Siegel in *Variety*. "A few of us have come through, and I'm very grateful for that," she says. But "when we do get our stories told, we have some executive who knows nothing about who we are as a people. And then they're like, 'Can you spice it up a little bit?' You want to punch these people in the face. And then if it's too real, they're, 'Could you pull it back, 'cause we don't want the audience to feel offended.'" Perez, 58, knows the humiliation of playing clichéd roles all too well, having played an illiterate drug dealer's girlfriend on the *21 Jump Street* series after her breakout role in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*. "My first scene, Johnny Depp whispered in my ear, 'Oh, darling, you're too good for this shit,'" Perez says. He told her, "I'm gonna tell people about you. You know, you're right for the good stuff.'" Though she has no clue if Depp did put in a good word on her behalf, his encouragement made her question the guidance of her agent at the time. "She told me that if I dyed my hair blond and got a nose job, 'I can get you more jobs. Because you're not Black,'" Perez says. "I couldn't believe it. I was like, 'Oh, my goodness. Like, thank you, fired.'"

Sheeran's rocky road

Ed Sheeran is used to being mocked, said Brian Hiatt in *Rolling Stone*. The British singer has the album sales—about 150 million—of a global pop star, but not the appearance, with his messy ginger hair, chubby body, and frumpy T-shirts. "I was the butt of jokes before this," he says, "and I'm the butt of jokes now. I *am* a nerd." Sheeran, 31, is keenly aware he doesn't look like heartthrobs like Justin Bieber and Shawn Mendes. "I'm like, 'Well, why don't I have a six-pack? Oh, because you love kebabs and drink beer.'" He describes himself as a binge eater who has suffered from bulimia, and also has struggled with drinking and drug use. Then last year, one of his best friends—British music entrepreneur Jamal Edwards—died as a result of a heart attack brought on by cocaine use. His death sent Sheeran spiraling into depression. "I felt like I didn't want to live anymore," he says, "and I have had that throughout my life. You're under the waves drowning, and you can't get out of it." He began seeing a therapist for the first time. "No one really talks about their feelings where I come from," he says. "I think it's very helpful to be able to just vent and not feel guilty about venting."

In the news

■ **Gwyneth Paltrow** wasn't at fault for a 2016 skiing collision on a beginner's slope in which another skier was injured, a jury in Park City, Utah, unanimously found last week. The actress and wellness mogul, 50, was awarded one dollar—the symbolic request in her countersuit to retired optometrist Terry Sanderson's lawsuit. The 76-year-old sought $300,000, accusing Paltrow of causing serious injuries by slamming into him from behind. The eight-day trial centered on skiing ethics—the downhill skier has the right of way—and each party's credibility, with Paltrow's attorneys arguing she was being targeted because she's a wealthy celebrity. She said after the verdict that she refused to settle the case because "I felt that acquiescing to a false claim compromised my integrity." A juror told CNN, "It took us less than 20 minutes to say Gwyneth was not at fault." After the verdict, Paltrow touched Sanderson's shoulder and said, "I wish you well."

■ **Jeremy Renner** said this week that after being run over by a 7-ton snow plow in January, he wondered, "Am I just going to be a spine and a brain, like a science experiment?" The accident, near the actor's home in Nevada, left him with a fractured eye socket, jaw, ribs, knee, ankle, clavicle, and shoulder, among other life-threatening injuries. "I chose to survive," Renner, 52, told ABC's Diane Sawyer. He's been walking on an antigravity treadmill as part of his slow but intensive physical therapy. "I have lost a lot of flesh and bone in this experience," he said. "but I've been refueled and refilled with love and titanium."

■ **Chris Hemsworth** is taking fewer acting roles after learning that he has a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease, the *New York Post* reported this week. Known for playing Marvel's Thor, the strapping Australian actor, 39, took a variety of genetic tests while shooting a docuseries about aging. The tests revealed that he's among the 2 percent to 3 percent of humans with two copies of the gene APOE4, which Hemsworth says makes him 8 to 10 times more likely to develop Alzheimer's. That discovery "triggered something in me to want to take some time off," he said.

Getty, Hayley Benoit/The New York Times/Redux, Getty

The 15-minute city

How an influential urban planning concept spread globally—and inspired a conspiracy theory

What is the 15-minute city?

It's the urban planning concept that everything city residents need should be a short walk or bike ride away—about 15 minutes from home to work, shopping, entertainment, restaurants, schools, parks, and health care. Proponents argue that 15-minute cities are healthier for residents and the environment, creating cohesive mini-communities, bolstering local businesses, and encouraging people to get outside, walk, and cycle. The idea has roots going back decades, but Carlos Moreno, an urbanist based in Paris, started honing the theory's current iteration in 2010. "The rhythm of the city should follow humans, not cars," he said. "Neighborhoods should be designed so that we can live, work, and thrive in them without having to constantly commute elsewhere." The pandemic and remote work gave the idea a major boost, and more than 100 mayors worldwide have embraced it—at least in theory. But in both the U.S. and U.K. the walkable city has caused a major backlash on the Right, and Moreno is now being barraged by death threats. "I have become Public Enemy No. 1," he sighs.

Paris: Biking and walking is up, and driving is down.

What are the objections?

Libertarians and conspiracy theorists view the 15-minute city as an insidious attempt by socialists and environmental extremists to take away people's cars, independence, and individual freedom. They portray walkable neighborhoods as the first step in a "Great Reset" of society in which driving will be stigmatized and punished and people's movements will be restricted and monitored. "The idea that idiot tyrannical bureaucrats can decide by fiat where you're 'allowed' to drive," said Canadian psychologist and right-wing culture warrior Jordan Peterson, is "part of a well-documented plan" by "wannabe authoritarians."

Do 15-minute cities already exist?

Many cities across Europe offer approximations of the idea, but Paris has become its poster child. Mayor Anne Hidalgo has sought to combat climate change by decreasing choking traffic in the streets and fuel emissions. In 2015, Paris was 17th on the list of bike-friendly cities; by 2019, it was eighth. Car ownership, meanwhile, dropped from 60 percent of households in 2001 to 35 percent in 2019. The 15-minute city figured largely in Hidalgo's successful 2020 reelection campaign. The idea has also gained traction in the U.S. In 2010, Portland, Ore., created a plan for 20-minute neighborhoods based on the premise that everyone should live within a half-mile of schools, parks, and grocery stores. Four years later, the mayor of Detroit outlined a plan for 20-minute neighborhoods. But until recently, the concept remained little known outside of urban planning circles.

What changed?

The pandemic sparked renewed thinking about how we live. In July 2020, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a network of almost 100 mayors around the world, released an agenda for building more just and sustainable cities; last year, C40's executive director wrote that "any city where a private vehicle is necessary to get around is likely to be fundamentally unequal." In the first year of the pandemic, many cities, including American metropolises like New York, closed certain streets to cars and expanded bike lines and outdoor dining. Milan added 22 miles of bike lanes, while Montreal announced it would add over 180 miles of temporary pedestrian and cycling paths.

How feasible is this idea?

It clearly won't work everywhere: Not every city is as centralized and walkable as Paris. Sprawling, car-dominated cities like Los Angeles and Phoenix would be hard-pressed to provide everything people need within walking distance. In addition, some urban planners argue that the 15-minute city could increase the segregation of neighborhoods by income and race. Each neighborhood would become "an enclave—a ghetto," said Harvard urban economist Edward Glaeser. Neighborhoods equipped with all the amenities required by the 15-minute city also tend to have high housing costs and wealthier residents.

What is the concept's future?

Despite some resistance, the basic principles behind the 15-minute city are influencing planning in cities around the world, including Melbourne, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Singapore, and Shanghai. Toronto-based urban designer and thinker Jay Pitter says that "top down" government promotion of the "walkability" idea is bound to generate strong opposition, but holds promise as a guiding principle that local leaders can apply in zoning, planning, and other decisions. Despite what conspiracy theorists think, Moreno says, cities where basic needs are within walking distance create *more* individual freedom than needing to drive everywhere. "In a city of proximity in which services are always close by," he says, "mobility is a choice: You go where you want because you want to, not because you have to. My fight is not against the car. My fight is how we could improve the quality of life."

The pandemic's lasting impact

One of the most dramatic changes the pandemic brought was the growth of remote work. Instead of commuting to bustling business districts, many people began working from home—and suddenly, their immediate surroundings became much more important. From 2020 to 2021, LinkedIn job postings for remote work rose 457 percent. Meanwhile, public transit usage dropped: In New York City, average weekly subway and bus ridership was still under 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels in summer 2022. In Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., subway and bus service hasn't yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Some remote workers decided to move away from cities altogether, but those who stayed began to rethink where they wanted to live based on neighborhood feel and amenities. This seemingly new idea is actually a return to how cities used to be organized, says Arlington County Planning Commission member Daniel Weir. "Once upon a time, in living memory for our grandparents, every city in America was a 15-minute city," he says. "Sometime after the war, we got the idea that cities were about highways and cars, and people had to make way." But cities "are for people, not cars," he said. "When you're getting your needs met walking, the air is healthier, people are healthier, people know each other…people feel safer and they're more involved."

Getty

Best columns: The U.S.

Disney outsmarts DeSantis

Scott Maxwell
Orlando Sentinel

Mickey Mouse doesn’t have a middle finger on his hands, said Scott Maxwell, “but if he did, he most surely flipped it at Ron DeSantis” last week. To punish Disney for its condemnation of his anti-LGBTQ “Don’t Say Gay” bill, the Florida governor sought to take away the company’s control of its special taxing district and stacked its board of supervisors with allies from the Christian right. He openly warned the new board would use its power to police Disney for any “woke” content. But last week, Disney revealed it had signed a legal agreement with the old board before it was disbanded, rendering DeSantis’ new board essentially powerless. “Basically, Disney was playing 4-D chess while the governor’s legal team was fumbling with a bag of checkers.” DeSantis is “so used to picking on easy targets—drag queens and transgender teenagers—that he wasn’t prepared to do battle with someone with the power to fight back.” Still, a private company should never have had its own district, and the right thing to do would have been “to sunset Disney’s special status in a logical, legal matter.” The real losers in this petty squabble are “taxpayers and good government.”

How *not* to interview a wingnut

Matt Lewis
The Daily Beast

This week’s *60 Minutes* interview with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene has shown “how the mainstream news media” is unprepared “to respond to the challenges of the moment,” said Matt Lewis. The interview failed not because it “platformed” or “normalized” MTG, as some liberals contend. Greene is an increasingly powerful member of the Republican House majority, “and ignoring her isn’t going to make her go away.” The problem was that *60 Minutes* relied on its hoary conventions—here’s “B-roll video” of MGT lifting weights, or walking down the street in her district—to profile someone who is “not a normal Republican” or even “a normal *person*.” Veteran journalist Leslie Stahl, who spent decades interviewing conventional politicians, was clearly unprepared to deal with MGT’s belligerent extremism and shameless lying. When Greene insisted Democrats are in fact “pedophiles” who “sexualize” children, Stahl could only say “Wow” and adopt a look of disapproval. When Greene falsely denied that she’d called the Parkland shooting “a false-flag planned shooting,” Stahl let her get away with dismissing it as old news. In this era of extremism and misinformation, journalists must not be afraid to challenge lies and propaganda with evidence and facts.

A quiet gun-law revolution

Adam Winkler
Los Angeles Times

Even with gun violence spiking, said Adam Winkler, right-wing federal judges “are waging an unprecedented attack on U.S. gun-safety laws.” These Trump-appointed judges have been empowered by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last June that struck down New York’s handgun licensing requirements and “established a new test for courts to apply in *all* 2nd Amendment cases”: Equivalent laws had to be on the books in the 18th and 19th centuries. This “originalist” extremism has enabled federal judges to strike down state laws banning the erasure of serial numbers on guns, gun purchases by convicted felons and domestic abusers, and banning guns in churches, hospitals, bars, airports, and buses. Even when 200-year-old precedents exist, right-wing judges “have twisted themselves in knots” to deny it. Texas’19th-century ban on guns in “educational, literary, and scientific institutions,” a federal judge ruled, didn’t count, because other states didn’t have similar laws. “Many of the most important and effective gun laws we have” are without historic precedent, because the world has changed: There were no airports in 1800, for example. Most Americans want stricter gun-safety laws, “but a different kind of gun revolution is already underway.”

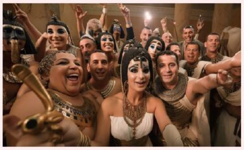
Viewpoint

“The primary selling point of the AR-15 is that it can be endlessly modified, configured, reimagined. It can become louder or quieter, easier to carry, wield, fire and reload, or more lethal. A vast assortment of accessories—vests, helmets, straps, and other gear—is unfailingly designated as ‘tactical.’ To the would-be tactician, every place that humans inhabit—housing developments, stores, strip malls, hotels, churches, hospitals and, yes, schools—is another opportunity to imagine oneself taking part in military-style maneuvers. It is hard to see the upside of instilling this paranoid attitude among millions of ordinary Americans.”

Matthew Walther in The New York Times

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A Milwaukee man reluctantly decided to move after cars crashed into his home 17 times in seven years. Junious Merriweather said he hated to leave his house because over the years, “I fixed it up in really good shape.” But speeding cars kept losing control on a curve out front, careening across the yard and into the house itself. Had he and his wife been sitting on the porch with their grandchildren during one of the crashes, “it would have been pretty detrimental,” he said. “We had to move.”



SWNS

■ A British film editor has used artificial intelligence to create a series of striking pictures depicting what it might have looked like if historical figures had taken selfies. Duncan Thomsen’s AI-generated selfies figures include Cleopatra, Henry VIII, Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo, and Jesus at the Last Supper. He used the AI software Midjourney, which taps into billions of online photos. “The results are hilarious,” Thomsen said. “Everyone I’ve shared my work with can’t believe how real the pictures really look.”

■ Scientists in Sweden have found a new treatment for social anxiety: sniffing other people’s body odor. Researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm who used mindfulness exercises to treat women’s social anxiety found that women who were exposed to the smell of armpit sweat collected from volunteers responded better to the therapy. Researcher Elisa Vigna said her team was “a little surprised” at the result, which may indicate that sweat contains “chemosignals” that affect emotions.

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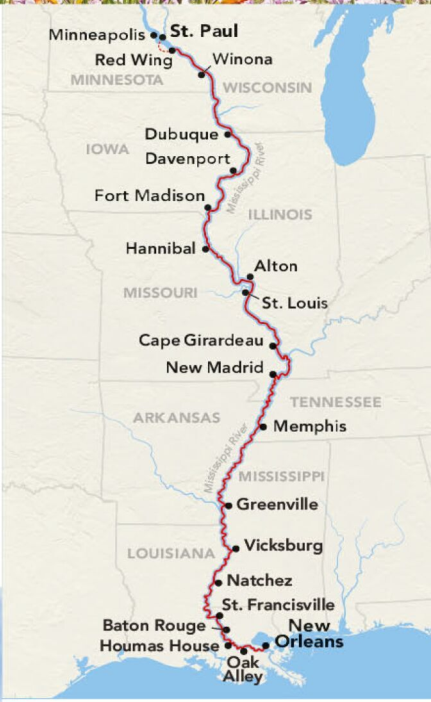
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Best columns: Europe

FRANCE

The streets aren’t safe for a king

Editorial
Libération

“Faced with a choice between two humiliations,” French President Emmanuel Macron thinks he picked the lesser, said *Libération*. King Charles III was supposed to visit last week, his first trip abroad since becoming British monarch. It was to be “a showcase for the new beginning of Franco-British relations,” which had been strained ever since Britain left the European Union. Should Macron allow the visit “to take place against a backdrop of massive demonstrations, transport strikes, burning bins, and possible attacks on royal security?” Or should he cancel it, exposing France as a country that can’t guarantee the safety of a visiting dignitary? Macron canceled, saying it was “simply common sense” to postpone the visit until he had less on his plate. “No doubt” he was mindful that the images of a tuxedoed president toasting a king at Versailles would only further inflame the demonstrators, who are enraged over Macron raising the retirement age. Losing the king’s visit was a “bitter defeat” for a head of state who has made official receptions a main “instrument of French soft power.” Since Germany’s Angela Merkel retired in 2021, Macron has hoped to be seen as leader of Europe. But guess where King Charles went last week instead of Paris? Berlin.

FINLAND

Why does Turkey run NATO?

Sanna Ukkola
Iltalehti

NATO is bowing to “a swaggering and undemocratic autocrat”—and I don’t mean Vladimir Putin, said Sanna Ukkola. Sweden and Finland, formerly neutral, announced their intentions to join NATO last year, after Russia invaded Ukraine. But Turkey’s increasingly authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdogan decided to exploit the alliance’s requirement for unanimity to demand concessions in exchange for his approval. He already held up Finland’s accession for a month before deigning to support it last week. Now Sweden, which angered Turkey by giving asylum to Kurdish dissidents, is in limbo. It’s an outrageous state of affairs that Erdogan can bring “the entire Western world to its knees in the midst of the biggest security crisis since World War II.” Frankly, Turkey shouldn’t even be a member state. If it tried to get in today, it wouldn’t meet the minimum criteria of democratic values. During the 20 years its “Islamist ruler” Erdogan has been in power, he has squelched free speech and independent courts and locked up tens of thousands of opponents. He supports extremists in Syria and bombs the Kurdish militias who are fighting ISIS there alongside U.S. troops. His was the only country that refused to join sanctions against Russia; instead, he welcomed the oligarchs. It’s time to face the facts: “Turkey has become a Trojan horse within NATO.”

United Kingdom: An unfunny laughing-gas problem

Getting high on nitrous oxide

Reuters

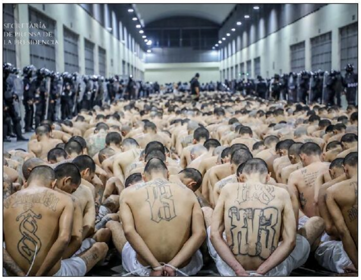
Britain is hooked on laughing gas, said **Jennifer Savin** in ***Cosmopolitan UK***. Nitrous oxide—or, if you prefer, “hippy crack”—has become the party drug of choice for 16- to 24-year-olds, who get a cheap though fleeting high by “huffing” it. Parks and streets are littered with the discarded silver canisters that nitrous oxide comes in and the balloons people fill to inhale it. Laughing gas has legitimate uses as an anesthetic for dental work and labor pains, and the U.K. Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs said it’s not dangerous enough to warrant a total ban under drug law. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak decided to take action, and his government just made possession a crime. “The public have rightly had enough,” he said. “Those responsible will be quickly and visibly punished.”

You don’t need “a time machine” to see where this will lead, said **Owen Jones** in ***The Guardian***. Prohibition never works. Outlawing nitrous oxide will simply hand the lucrative job of “meeting the demand” to criminal gangs. That’s what happened when the United States banned alcohol in the 1920s and again when it declared the “calamitous” war on drugs in the 1970s. There are less draconian ways to deal with this issue. If litter’s the concern, adopt a “deposit scheme” to get people to return used bottles instead of casting them into the street. If overdoses are the fear, try outreach programs. Criminalizing a drug so widely used means police will pick and choose whom to arrest, and with our “institutionally racist criminal justice system,” it’s a safe bet those detained will be disproportionately Black and Asian. “Lives will be ruined”—not by the drug, but by the ban.

Yet nitrous oxide isn’t benign, said **Lucy Dunn** in ***The Spectator***. It’s often assumed to be, since it offers just a quick high that lasts only a few seconds. But many of the 600,000 Britons who use it regularly have moved from the single-hit “whippet” canisters to much larger bottles that invite large doses and prolonged use. The gas blocks how nerve signals are sent, and frequent consumption “can have devastating consequences,” including neurological and brain damage. The damage starts with “tingling and numbness” in the feet and hands, and can progress to “paralysis, and, in extreme (and rare) cases, death.” Last year in London alone, more than 200 overdoses were rushed to the hospital by ambulance.

That sounds terrible, said **Hugo Rifkind** in ***The Times***, “until you ponder how all these kids might have been getting wasted otherwise.” This epidemic took off during the pandemic, when there was “nowhere to go but the park.” Young people could have turned to drugs that are more dangerous. Remember glue sniffing, which killed 152 people, most of them teenagers, in 1990, and heroin, in vogue later that decade? Or what about booze, which sent a million Britons—more than 20,000 of them under 24—to the hospital in a single recent year? Sure, laughing gas isn’t harmless. “Might it not, though, have displaced things that were far, far worse?”

El Salvador: Gang crackdown fuels rising repression


SECRETARÍA DE PRENSA DE LA PRESIDENCIA

El Salvador's chilling mega-prison

A year ago, El Salvador was wracked by brutal gang warfare, and President Nayib Bukele promised to put a stop to it. He's done so, said ***El País*** (Spain) in an editorial, by turning the country into a dystopia. Bukele suspended civil rights and arrested tens of thousands of suspected gang members. El Salvador now has the most prisoners per capita in the world—nearly double the rate of the U.S. To house all these men, he built a mega-prison that will be able to hold 40,000 inmates, boasting eight cell buildings surrounded by 37 guard towers. The photos and videos the government has released of conditions inside are chilling. They show detainees being treated "like stabled cattle," stripped to their underwear, their hands zip-tied behind them. The government says these men are all gang members who deserve their punishment. But human rights groups say the crackdown has swept up journalists, opposition figures, and ordinary Salvadorans, including many teens. Under the emergency measures, detainees have no right to a lawyer. Many have been held for months without trial. And according to Justice Minister Gustavo Villatoro, "they are never going to return to our communities, our neighborhoods, our barrios, our cities."

The vast majority of Salvadorans support this merciless approach, said ***El Mundo*** (El Salvador) in an editorial. Over the preceding three decades, gang violence had "become too much of a nightmare to bear." The country ranked third in the world for violent deaths of civilians, just after Syria and South Sudan. Grown men couldn't walk the streets safely, even in daylight, while mothers feared their young sons would be forced into violent gangs. Parliament easily granted Bukele his new powers in March 2022 after gangs, including the notoriously brutal MS-13, killed some 86 people in a single weekend. In recent polls, 90 percent of Salvadorans said they support Bukele's measures, and some 65 percent are afraid that the murder rate will once again skyrocket if they are lifted. That's because they don't realize that it's not just the gangs that have lost their freedom but everyone, said **Claudia Espinoza** in ***La Prensa Grafica*** (El Salvador). Those same polls show that 75 percent of citizens don't realize that they've lost the right to freedom of assembly, that their texts and emails can be spied on, that they can be kept without trial indefinitely. And the regime's biggest supporters are "those who are least aware of the rights they've lost."

Bukele's "uncontrollable thirst for repression, power, and control" is only growing, said **Eugenio Chicas** in ***El Mundo*** (El Salvador). We saw his authoritarian leanings early in his presidency, when he sent armed soldiers into the legislature in 2020 to cow lawmakers into supporting his anti-crime bill. Now he is using his emergency measures to target the press, unions, NGOs, anyone who opposes him. He bypassed the constitution's ban on consecutive terms and had a court let him run for reelection in 2024; his domination of the judiciary and dismantling of democratic institutions make a win all but inevitable. Thirty years after the end of its civil war, El Salvador is sliding again into "dictatorship."

MEXICO

The president has blood on his hands

Carlos Loret de Mola
El Universal

Last week, 39 human beings died in agony at a Juárez immigration center, trapped as flames and smoke rose around them, said Carlos Loret de Mola in *El Universal*. Responsibility for that tragedy lies with one man: President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. He's the one who praised the dictators in Central and South America, even as their people fled northward for a better life. He's the one who first opened Mexico's doors to those migrants and then, when "migration to Mexico overflowed, slammed them shut." He is the one who caved to the Trump administration's demand for a "remain in Mexico policy," with the result that we're now housing "the tens of thousands of migrants that the United States sends every year." Crucially, he's also the one who failed to allot enough resources to detain those people, leaving them warehoused in makeshift shelters like the one that caught fire. Nobody will forget the videos of "federal agents strolling comfortably out of the burning center" and leaving the screaming migrants to their deaths. These weren't criminals. These 38 people merely dared "to seek a future far from poverty, violence, or political repression." López Obrador's migration policy has "no mercy, no soul." The dead in Ciudad Juárez should forever be known as his victims.

ETHIOPIA

Egypt doesn't own the Nile

Kungu Al-Mahadi Adam
Nile Post

Egypt is trying to sabotage Ethiopia's massive dam project, said Kungu Al-Mahadi Adam in the *Nile Post*. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile is almost finished, a $5 billion feat Ethiopia managed all on its own without foreign funding. It will be the world's seventh-largest dam, producing electricity for 65 million people. But Egypt has opposed it every step of the way. It claims damming the Blue Nile will reduce flow downstream in the greater Nile that disgorges into the Mediterranean. Just last week, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry spoke out against the project at an Arab League meeting, calling Ethiopia's actions "unilateral" and "uncooperative." It's a preposterous charge. Unilateral? Sudan, which is also downstream from the dam, supports the project. Uncooperative? We've been negotiating and sharing technical information for years. In any case, hydroelectric dams don't "consume" water—they merely harness its flow to generate power. The true problem is that "Egypt believes that the Nile River is its historical property and that no other country or person has a right to touch a drop of it." But the Nile, with its tributaries the Blue Nile and White Nile, touches 11 countries, and they, too, have the right to use its waters.

Getty

Talking points

Noted

- Since the 2021 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, prompted calls for new gun restrictions, Republican-led states have rolled back background checks, eliminated permitting requirements, and expanded where guns can be carried, including on college campuses. Currently, 25 states require no permits or training to carry a handgun, up from 16 in 2020.
The New York Times

- Since Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg took office in January 2022, his prosecutors have filed 117 felony counts of falsifying business records, targeting 29 individuals and firms.
The New York Times

- Extreme weather events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, blizzards, and droughts are more powerful, expensive, and frequent in the U.S. than any other country. The country's geography, proximity to two oceans and the Gulf of Mexico, densely populated desert areas, clashing temperatures in air masses from the north and south, and placement of major cities in vulnerable areas all play a role.
Associated Press

- Since George W. Bush launched the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief in 2003, AIDS deaths have dropped from 2 million people to 650,000 in 2021. The State Department estimates that PEPFAR, which provides antiretrovirals to tens of millions of HIV patients throughout the world, has saved 25 million lives.
The Wall Street Journal

Baseball: Are faster games better?

Dodgers
7
0:03

The pitch clock is speeding up games.

MLB's Opening Day last week featured a first "in baseball history," said **Tyler Kepner** in ***The New York Times***. An umpire called strike three on Boston Red Sox star Rafael Devers because he wasn't ready when the new pitch clock hit the 8-second mark. Pitchers, too, now have time limits, and umps will call a ball if they take more than 15 seconds between pitches, or 20 seconds if there are men on base. The goal is to eliminate the boring lulls caused when batters left the box to fuss with their gloves and pitchers dawdled on the mound, leading to four-hour night games that dragged toward midnight. It's working: The average game duration so far this season is a crisp 2 hours and 41 minutes, down 23 minutes from last season. MLB lost "almost 15 million paid customers over the past 15 years," said **Tom Verducci** in ***Sports Illustrated***, mainly because the game became "too slow." Now the sport "has turned a sharp corner," with other rule changes leading to more hits, more stolen bases, and more excitement.

"I have no patience for people who argue that baseball needs to be 'more exciting,'" said **Jonathan V. Last** in ***The Bulwark***. It's meant to be a leisurely, "pastoral" experience—"the only team sport *without* a clock." No one who found baseball boring before will be converted because the games are 23 minutes shorter. And imagine how fans will feel when a big game is decided by a pitch-clock strikeout. The other rule changes are similarly wrongheaded: bigger bases and limited pickoff attempts that incentivize stealing, and a ban on defensive shifts, which makes hitting easier. All that MLB has succeeded in doing is "diluting the essence of the game."

The problem with baseball "wasn't just the tedium," said **Steve Kettman** in ***The New York Times***. "It was the death of possibility." The computer-driven analytics revolution led to plodding, predictable games in which the action consisted mostly of strikeouts, walks, and the occasional home run. It's already clear that reintroducing "unpredictability"—a hit-and-run, a single through the infield, a stolen base—"is a lot more fun." And it's returning baseball to the "faster, freer" pace and style of play from the national pastime's heyday decades ago. "It's almost like watching a different game."

National debt: Will the U.S. stumble into default?

House Republicans and the White House are deadlocked as the U.S. approaches "the debt-ceiling precipice," said **Declan Garvey** in ***The Dispatch***, and "some lawmakers are growing more nervous they'll stumble over the edge." The U.S. hit its $31.4 trillion debt ceiling in January, and the Treasury Department's stopgap funding measures will be exhausted this summer. A U.S. debt default would trigger a "global financial meltdown," but President Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy still sound "like two UFC fighters trash-talking before a prizefight." McCarthy insisted that any increase in the debt ceiling be tied to major spending cuts. Biden has proposed cutting the deficit with trillions in tax increases on corporations and the wealthy, and is refusing to negotiate until Republicans release a budget with their proposed cuts. "We've made no progress," McCarthy said.

The root of the problem, said **Dominic Pino** in ***National Review***, is that "what the public wants is mathematically impossible." A new Associated Press poll found that 60 percent of Americans agreed that the government is spending too much. But when asked to select specific areas for cuts, the only category a majority wanted to shrink was foreign aid—only "1 percent of the budget." The ballooning costs of Social Security and Medicare already make up a third of the federal budget, but 62 percent and 58 percent, respectively, said we spend *too little* on them. With last year's budget a whopping $1.4 trillion in the red, we essentially have "bipartisan agreement" to continue with this "fiscal insanity."

Future spending and paying our past debts "should not be linked," said **Catherine Rampell** in ***The Washington Post***. But House Republicans refuse to pass a clean debt increase, as they did three times during Donald Trump's administration, because they see American credit as "a valuable hostage" for their demands for spending cuts. Republicans can't even agree among themselves on what they want, said **David Firestone** in ***The New York Times***. The MAGA wing pretends the U.S. can balance its budget within 10 years without tax increases, which would require cutting all discretionary spending by an "unimaginable" 85 percent. Biden apparently is hoping that, as disaster approaches, business interests will force the GOP to give in. But with radicals using the Republicans' slim House majority as leverage over McCarthy, "it's hard to count on that."

Getty, AP

Patriotism: No longer ‘very important’ to most

Patriotism waxes and wanes with events.

“This is a picture of a people and nation in trouble,” said **Hugo Gurdon** in the *Washington Examiner*. Last week, a poll from *The Wall Street Journal* and NORC, a nonpartisan research organization, revealed that values such as patriotism, religious faith, having children, and community involvement are rapidly becoming less important to Americans. Only 38 percent of respondents said patriotism was very important—a stunning decline from the 61 percent in 2019 and 70 percent in 1998. That trend is especially dramatic among those under 30: Just 23 percent described patriotism as very important. Results were strongly split across party lines: 59 percent of Republicans reported that patriotism was very important, compared with 23 percent of Democrats. Only 39 percent of people considered religion very important—down from 62 percent in 1998. The only way to read these results is that “Americans are losing faith and interest in their country and its future.”

Actually, there is another way, said **Patrick Ruffini** in his Substack newsletter. The older polls were conducted over the phone, while the new one was completed online and “probably does a better job at revealing the true state” of American values. People are more honest online than when speaking to another human being on the phone; it’s very likely those previous results “were inflated by social-desirability bias.” There’s another reason to take these results with a big grain of salt, said **Jim Geraghty** in *National Review*. Respondents were asked to rank values as very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all. Those are very subjective categories. If you combine “very” and “somewhat important,” 73 percent still say they’re patriotic, and 65 percent care about having children. The declines are admittedly “not good news,” but do not indicate a “catastrophic, sudden drop-off.”

The decline in patriotism in particular is “clearly a byproduct of polarization,” said **Aaron Blake** in *The Washington Post*. How people define patriotism tends “to be responsive to real-world events.” The late 1990s were “boom times,” but polls from 1976 and 1977 show results fairly similar to today’s—Vietnam and Watergate were on respondents’ minds. Now, it’s Trumpism and MAGA-style nationalism that’s tainting flag-waving for many Americans, including independents. Combine that with concerns over the economy and bitter partisanship, and “these numbers probably shouldn’t be too surprising.”

Obamacare: A legal assault on preventive care

A federal judge in Texas has “struck down a major part of the Affordable Care Act,” in a ruling that could “worsen health-care costs for millions of Americans,” said **Matt Ford** in *The New Republic*. Judge Reed O’Connor ruled unconstitutional a provision requiring insurers to fully cover an array of preventive-care measures, such as prenatal care, mammograms, and screenings for other common forms of cancer. It’s the fourth time O’Connor has ruled parts of the ACA unconstitutional; in 2018, he struck down the entire act with a ruling “so preposterous it was widely condemned by legal experts” and overturned 7-2 by the Supreme Court. This time he sided with a Christian business owner who objected to his employees’ plans covering PrEP drugs that prevent HIV transmission. O’Connor ruled that because decisions about mandatory preventive-care coverage are made by a panel of experts who aren’t appointed by the president or confirmed by the Senate, those mandates violate the Constitution.

“The list of services that could become out of reach for many people is long,” said **Pema Levy** in *Mother Jones*. Nobody’s coverage will change immediately; for one thing, the Biden administration has requested a stay pending appeals. But if the ruling stands, health insurers would no longer have to fully cover prenatal care, cholesterol-lowering drugs, STD screenings, or cancer screenings such as colonoscopies. That would “have a disastrous outcome for health care in the U.S.,” said **Lisa Jarvis** in ***Bloomberg***. Preventive care saves hundreds of thousands of lives every year, and numerous studies have shown most people will forgo it if it costs even a $25 co-pay.

O’Connor is unlikely to “have the final word,” said **Ian Millhiser** in ***Vox***. Still, if this case reaches the U.S. Supreme Court, it may “get even worse for patients.” There are three government bodies that set standards for preventive care, and O’Connor invalidated only one of them. He said “binding precedents” tied his hands in the case of the other two, which set guidelines for vaccinations and some preventive care for women and children. But the Supreme Court has “the power to overrule those precedents.” And in a 2020 ruling, five of the court’s six conservative justices questioned the power of all three bodies. So thanks to Republicans’ “capture of the federal judiciary,” U.S. health coverage “could get worse—potentially much worse—in the near future.”

Getty

Wit & Wisdom

“Fashion passes; style remains.”
Coco Chanel, quoted in Mirchi (India)

“Advances are made by answering questions. Discoveries are made by questioning answers.”
Astrophysicist Bernard Haisch, quoted in National Energy Technology Laboratory website

“Obsessive people make great art.”
Susan Sontag, quoted in Tasting Table

“Rice is great when you’re hungry and you want two thousand of something.”
Comedian Mitch Hedberg, quoted in Mashed

“Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction.”
Ronald Reagan, quoted in the Vineyard Gazette

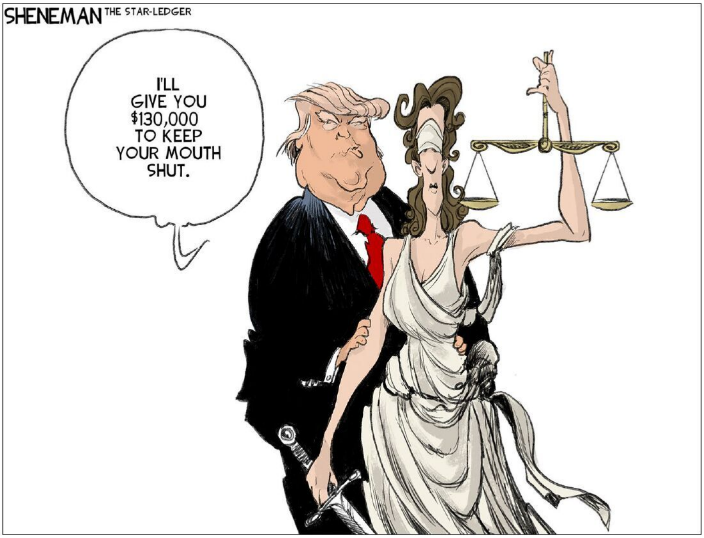
“We don’t need museums, we need a movement. The only way you honor your prophets is when they fall, you pick up the baton and walk the next mile.”
Rev. William Barber, quoted in The Guardian

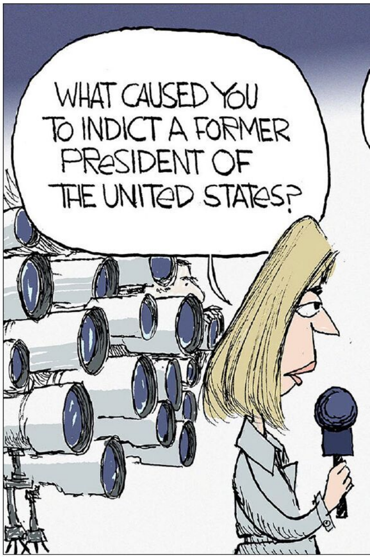
“In nuclear war, all men are cremated equal.”
Musician Dexter Gordon, quoted in the Hanover Post (Ontario)

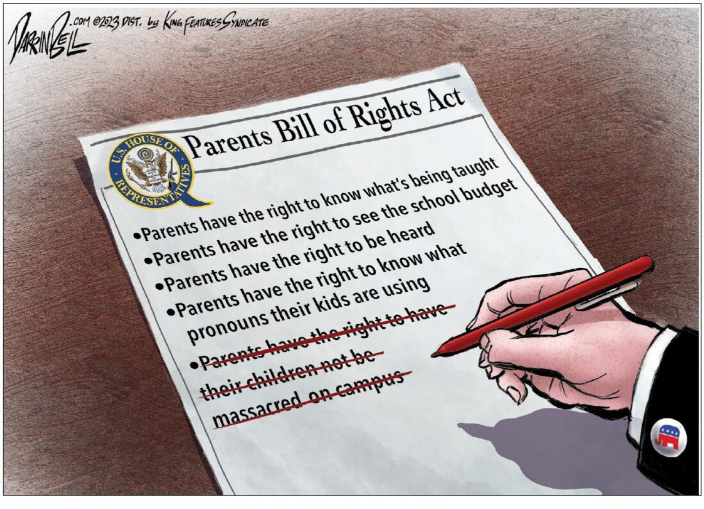
Poll watch

■ **60%** of Americans approve of the indictment of Donald Trump by a New York grand jury, but **75%** believe politics played at least some role in the decision to indict the former president. **37%** believe Trump acted illegally, while **33%** think he acted unethically but not illegally. **20%** aren’t sure, and just **10%** believe Trump is blameless. **34%** of Americans view the former president favorably, while **58%** view him unfavorably.
CNN/SSRS

Pick of the week's cartoons


SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER
I'LL GIVE YOU $130,000 TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.


WHAT CAUSED YOU TO INDICT A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES?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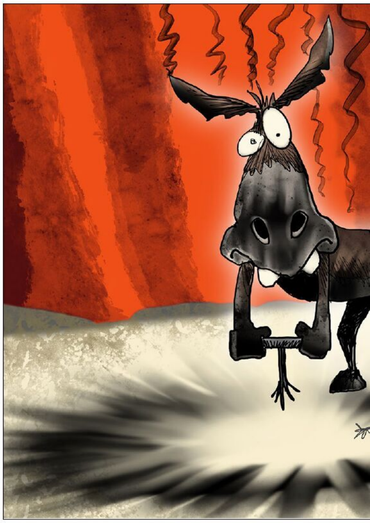
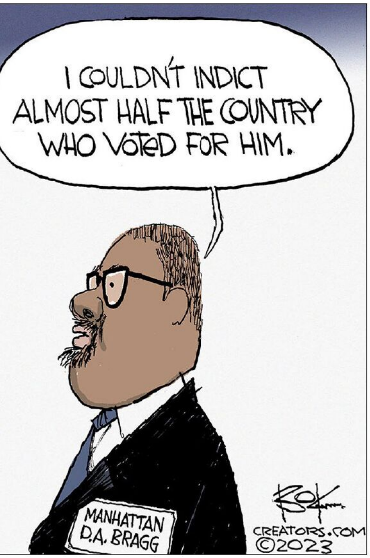
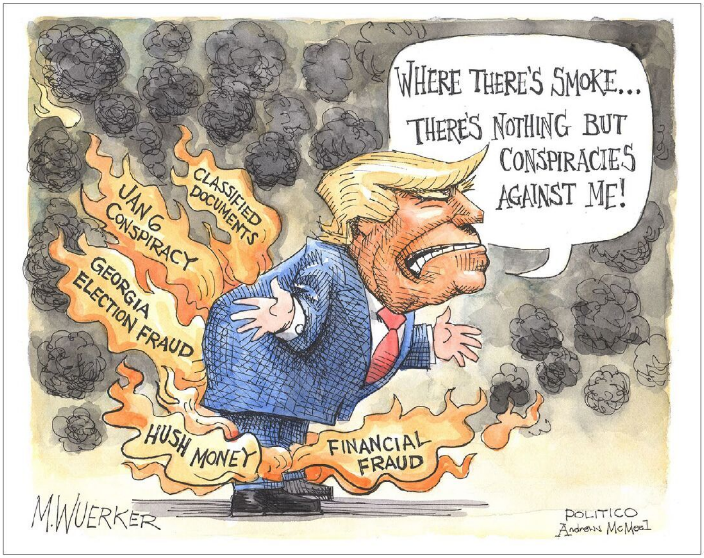
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Parents Bill of Rights Act
•Parents have the right to know what's being taught
•Parents have the right to see the school budget
•Parents have the right to be heard
•Parents have the right to know what pronouns their kids are using
•~~Parents have the right to have their children not be massacred on campus~~

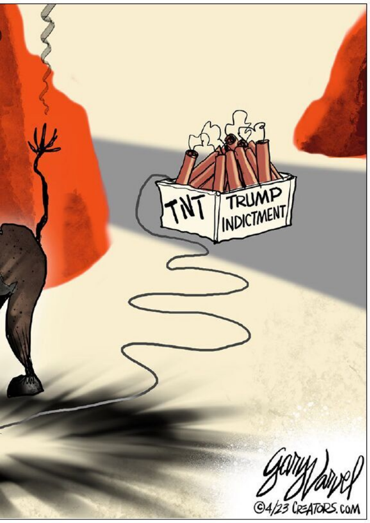


For more political cartoons, visit: www.theweek.com/cartoons.

Pick of the week's cartoons


I COULDN'T INDICT ALMOST HALF THE COUNTRY WHO VOTED FOR HIM.
MANHATTAN D.A. BRAGG
BOK
CREATORS.COM ©2023


WHERE THERE'S SMOKE... THERE'S NOTHING BUT CONSPIRACIES AGAINST ME!
CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS
JAN 6 CONSPIRACY
GEORGIA ELECTION FRAUD
HUSH MONEY
FINANCIAL FRAUD
M.WUERKER
POLITICO
Andrews McMeel


TNT
TRUMP INDICTMENT
Gary Varvel
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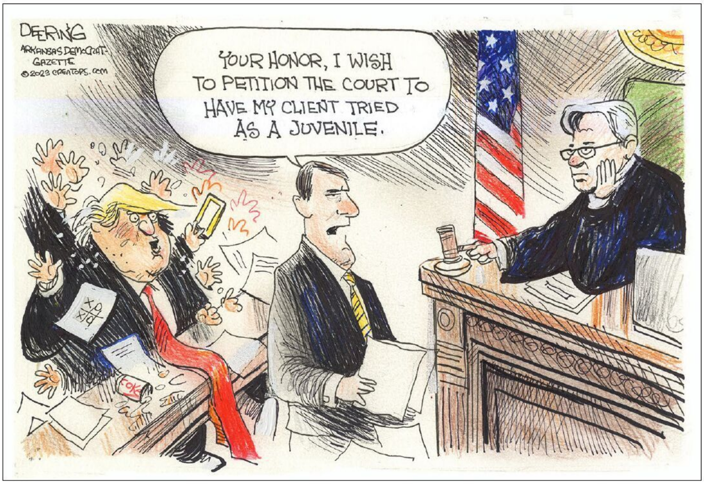
DEERING
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
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YOUR HONOR, I WISH TO PETITION THE COURT TO HAVE MY CLIENT TRIED AS A JUVENILE.

Metaverse: The club that no one wants to join

Once you're inside, what exactly do you do?

The metaverse era may be over before it's begun, said **Meghan Bobrowsky** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. Last week, Disney "shut down the division that was developing" strategies for its version of a virtual environment. Microsoft has also already cut back on its metaverse initiatives. "The price for virtual real estate in some online worlds, where users can hang out as avatars," has fallen by as much 90 percent after experiencing a digital gold rush last year. Even Mark Zuckerberg, who changed the name of his company from Facebook to Meta as a signal of his grand ambitions, is now focused more on artificial intelligence; on an earnings call, he mentioned AI 28 separate times. Meta has spent billions developing its hardware and flagship virtual reality app, yet sales of Quest 2 virtual reality headsets were down in the most recent quarter.

"After a certain number of hours in Zuckerberg's personal universe, you find yourself asking questions like, 'Does he think this is *good*?'" said **Paul Murray** in ***New York*** magazine. In my initial forays into Horizon Worlds, the whole thing felt "desolate, like an abandoned mall, and ordinarily I wouldn't be lining up to join the misfits still populating it." I encountered blatant racism, misogyny, and a lot of kids making potty jokes, all from emotionless cartoon heads with no legs. The biggest problem with the metaverse, though, is that it's just boring. Nobody has any real connection, and there's not much to do. That's a sizable flaw for something that's already cost $36 billion to create.

Don't count out the metaverse yet, said **Doug Griffin** in ***Venture Beat***. "First and most obviously, Meta and the metaverse are not the same." Just because Meta's version might stink doesn't mean that the entire concept of the metaverse is doomed. Too often "we overestimate the impact of a new technology in the short run" and then "underestimate it in the long run."

If the metaverse is to be revived, the key player may turn out to be not Meta, but Apple, said **Daniel Howley** in ***Yahoo News***. In an interview with *GQ* last week, Apple CEO Tim Cook laid out "his vision for an AR/VR device" that would "greatly enhance people's communication, people's connection." Apple is expected to reveal its long-anticipated headset in June, its first major new consumer product since the AirPods. "Apple has proven time and again" it can enter a market late and then take over, while turning skeptics into Apple apostles. It did so with the iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, and AirPods. Virtual reality might be next.

Innovation of the week

A tiny startup wants to bring "last-mile mobility" to the moon, said Kenneth Chang in *The New York Times*. Astrolab is building a lunar rover "the size of a Jeep Wrangler" with a speed capable of 15 mph. It might not sound like much, but that's "much faster" than NASA's Perseverance on Mars. The company "would make money by lifting and deploying cargo for customers on the lunar surface," using a robotic arm to assist. "Think of it like being UPS for the moon," said Astrolab founder and CEO Jaret Matthews, who previously worked at SpaceX and NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab. The company recently signed an agreement with SpaceX to hitch a ride to the moon on a Starship rocket by 2026.

Bytes: What's new in tech

AI in a Silicon Valley school

Not every school is feeling threatened by the introduction of artificially intelligent chatbots, said Lisa Bonos in *The Washington Post*. In fact, the private Khan Lab School in Silicon Valley is embracing it. "A special version of the technology," developed in collaboration with OpenAI, is programmed to act like "a thoughtful tutor." One teacher directs students to use the chatbot "to help them design questions for an upcoming Socratic seminar where they'll debate whether the Mongolian empire was barbaric." He asks it "to simulate a conversation with Genghis Khan about the Mongols' military tactics." The program "isn't magic, it's just a source," the students are informed, and therefore its use in the classroom has to be cited and its answers always double-checked.

ByteDance's TikTok backup plan

TikTok parent company ByteDance launched another social-media app that's quickly soaring up the app store charts, said Sarah Perez in *TechCrunch*. Lemon8 is a picture-based "Instagram rival" powered by an algorithm that may be attempting to re-create the success of Chinese shopping and lifestyle recommendations apps. It quietly debuted in the U.S. and U.K. in February without much fanfare. But last week, "as lawmakers moved forward with their plans for a TikTok ban," the sister app jumped into the top 10 on the Apple App Store's Top Apps chart, excluding games. On TikTok, prominent creators "recently began posting about Lemon8" in what seems to be a "user-acquisition push." The new app could be ByteDance's "backup plan" for a TikTok ban—though it might not help if the U.S. adopts "wide-ranging restrictions on Chinese tech."

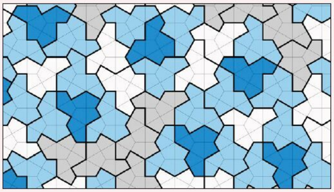
Jailed for a false face match

A Georgia man was wrongfully arrested for a crime committed in a state he'd never visited, in the latest snafu for face-recognition technology, said Kashmir Hill and Ryan Mac in *The New York Times*. In November, Randal Quran Reid spent nearly a week in jail after he was accused of being a purse thief in New Orleans. Reid "had never been to Louisiana," but he "bore a resemblance to a suspect recorded by a surveillance camera." The sheriff's office charging Reid has a contract with a facial-recognition vendor called Clearview AI, which scrapes photos off the web that law enforcement can match with surveillance footage. That technology "had been used to identify Reid," though "none of the documents used to arrest him disclosed that."

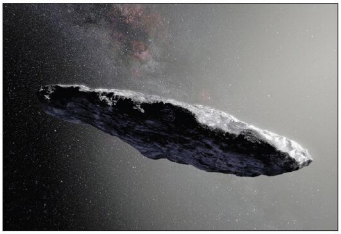
Shutterstock

The shape that does the impossible

An amateur mathematician has discovered the world's first-known "einstein": a single shape that can form an endless, non-repeating tile pattern. A checkerboard or honeycomb tile pattern is infinite and regular, but an einstein—named not for the famous physicist but rather after the German for "one stone" or one tile—is infinite and irregular. Mathematicians have been searching for one for decades. David Smith, a 64-year-old retired printing technician from Bridlington, England, tinkered with shapes for years in pursuit of his discovery, using computer software and then cutting the more promising shapes out of cardstock to use as puzzle pieces. "It's always nice to get hands-on," Smith tells *The New York Times*. "It provides a better understanding of how a shape does or does not tessellate"—that is, fit together without spaces or overlapping. Once he came up with a 13-sided, hat-like shape made of eight kite shapes, he reached out to University of Waterloo computer scientist Craig Kaplan, who tested it with an algorithm. A forthcoming paper by Smith, Kaplan, and others uses two mathematical proofs to establish that the shape is an einstein. In the real world, the discovery could help scientists develop stronger materials, as repeating patterns in structures such as crystals are prone to developing fault lines and breaking. "It's a really good shape, strikingly simple," says Nobel Prize–winning mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose. "It's a tour de force."



Each 'hat' is made of eight little 'kites.'



A comet that lacked a tail

It wasn't an alien

When a pancake-shaped space rock hurtled through the sky back in 2017, the first interstellar object recorded in our solar system, some scientists suspected it was an alien probe. We now know that "Oumuamua"— the Hawaiian word for "scout"—was in fact a comet, reports *CNN.com*. Flat and about the length of a football field, Oumuamua accelerated more than expected as it catapulted around the sun, as if something were driving it. Comets do that because the dust on their surfaces heats and outgasses in a tail, but this object didn't have a tail. Harvard astrophysicist Avi Loeb even posited that it could be a "light sail" created by an alien civilization. But a new study offers a more prosaic explanation. Using computer modeling, researchers determined that Oumuamua likely contains ice that was cooked by cosmic radiation until the hydrogen molecules got trapped in tiny pockets. When Oumuamua got close enough to the sun to melt slightly, those molecules were expelled outward, increasing the rock's speed without its sprouting a tail. "When the body is warmed, the water ice restructures to a more stable and compact form, and the trapped gas can escape," says study author Jennifer Bergner. "This could explain Oumuamua's behavior but doesn't need to invoke any exotic chemistry or physics."

Craig Kaplan, Reuters, Getty

Roaches' new sex trick

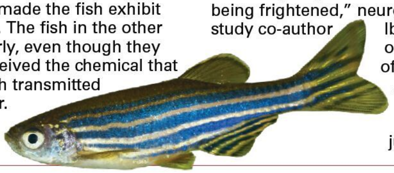
Cockroaches are sidestepping traps by changing their sex habits, reports *The Atlantic*. Male German cockroaches lure a female by secreting a sweet substance as a gift, then mount the female while she eats. The substance contains maltose, which the female's saliva converts into glucose. But because popular roach baits embed their poison in corn syrup, some roaches developed a glucose aversion. That made the traps less effective against them, but it also made it harder for them to mate, since glucose-averse females refused the males' offerings. Now researchers at North Carolina State University have found, the males have developed a workaround. Instead of maltose, their secretions contain maltotriose, which takes more time to break down—so the females' glucose aversion doesn't kick in until the males have had a chance to initiate copulation. This appears to be why the German cockroach can still infest and breed in buildings with roach traps. "They overcome challenges over and over," says entomologist Chow-Yang Lee, who was not involved in the study. "You cannot help but have a lot of respect."

UTIs can come from meat

People are told they can avoid most urinary tract infections by practicing proper hygiene and urinating after sex. But it turns out that nearly 10 percent of UTIs in the U.S.—some 640,000 a year—might be caused by eating or handling meat contaminated with *E. coli*. Researchers at George Washington University sequenced strains of *E. coli* found in chicken, turkey, and pork in Flagstaff, Ariz., grocery stores and compared them with urine and blood samples taken from local women and men hospitalized with UTIs. They found matching *E. coli* strains, predominately in poultry. These bacteria can live in the gut for days before migrating to the urinary tract. "It can be a long time between your exposure to the meat and the time that you actually got the urinary tract infection," study co-author Lance B. Price tells *The Washington Post*. UTIs usually cause minor bladder infections but can also cause serious kidney infections or life-threatening blood infections. The finding underscores the importance of careful handling of raw meat, and could spur widespread vaccination of animals against the *E. coli* strains connected to UTIs.

Fish that care

Tiny zebrafish may not seem capable of commiseration. But a new study suggests they can sense and share each other's fear—which could mean that empathy is not just a mammalian trait. In a series of tests, researchers dosed one of two adjacent tanks of zebrafish with a substance that made the fish exhibit fearful behaviors. The fish in the other tank acted similarly, even though they couldn't have received the chemical that the frightened fish transmitted to warn of danger. Oxytocin seems to play a role: When researchers genetically altered fish to stop producing the hormone, they didn't mimic their fearful neighbors, but after they were injected with oxytocin, they did. The results suggest that empathetic impulses may go back as much as 450 million years, to when fish and mammals shared a common ancestor. "They respond to other individuals being frightened," neuroscientist and study co-author Ibukun Akinrinade of the University of Calgary tells the Associated Press. "In that regard, they behave just like us."



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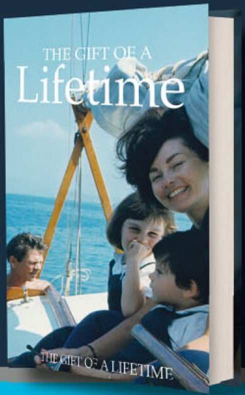
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HOW TO CREATE WEALTH

A SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE EDITORS OF *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*

C.J. Burton

Investing: Keep calm in rough seas

By Anne Kates Smith

Last year's financial markets provided a vivid reminder of why good investing hygiene is important all the time. Investors are grappling with a host of market scourges at once—Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an inflation surge, and rising interest rates. But a well-maintained portfolio should weather such storms over the long haul, especially if you remain patient while also taking advantage of the opportunities that the market offers.

You should not change your game plan when stocks wobble—and that advice applies both to exiting the market in fear and to rushing to buy every dip. Your asset allocation should be appropriate to your age and your risk tolerance in terms of what your financial situation can reasonably bear and what allows you to sleep at night. For example, a fully invested, aggressive investor with more than a decade to invest might allocate 85 percent to stocks and 15 percent to bonds. A conservative investor or one with a short time to invest might target 70 percent in bonds and 30 percent in stocks, with a preference for dividend-paying stocks.

The market has also recently reminded us that stock leadership can pivot in a heartbeat. A table of investment returns over the 20 calendar years through 2022 compiled by investing consultant Callan shows that U.S. large-company stocks logged the best returns in three of those years; U.S. small caps and real estate stocks each came in first four times; and emerging-markets stocks led in five of the 20 years. That shows that a diversified portfolio should contain multiple asset classes, and within those, several investing styles, sectors, and industries. If you follow that script, when one part of your portfolio is struggling, other investments will likely pick up the slack.

What to do now: When seeking out the stocks, investors will need to be brave and patient in regard to timing, as well as agile as the market eventually transitions from bear market to bull market. For stocks, the turn from tighter monetary policy to easing will be a compelling all-clear signal—as will rock-bottom valuations in prices.

Resist the bargain-basement appeal of the most beaten-up stocks and focus instead on high-quality shares. **Amazon.com (AMZN, $103.29)** is so cheap these days that the managers at the Dodge & Cox Stock fund, who are sticklers about price, scooped up shares of the e-commerce and cloud-computing juggernaut. A recession would dent near-term results, but the company's dominant role in its key markets will buoy it in the long run. After a sum-of-the-parts analysis, Shyam Patil, of investment firm Susquehanna International Group, recently set a 12-month price target on shares of $150, representing implied upside of about 45 percent. Another pick might be **T-Mobile US (TMUS, $144.84)**, the second-largest wireless carrier in terms of U.S. market share. But it is sprinting ahead of the others in terms of growth, says analyst Keith Snyder, at investment research firm CFRA.

Consumer discretionary stocks have had a tough time in recent years—and this challenging environment could continue in the near term. Still, the sector boasts strong fundamentals and attractive valuations, and through mid-March was behind only technology and communications in performance. One option in the sector now: **Tapestry (TPR, $43.11)**, the retail holding company for luxury brands Coach, Kate Spade, and Stuart Weitzman. According to Ian Schatzberg, co-founder of brand agency General Idea, Tapestry continues to remake itself to be more relevant with Gen Z and Millennial shoppers and "has really focused on modernizing the way in which they behave." It is also reasonably priced, trading at 10.1 times forward earnings, below its five-year average of 11.6.

In 2022, extreme volatility sparked substantial (and in some cases, record-setting) losses across the bond market. But bond funds remain a key part of any portfolio, and one that is lacking in many portfolios. The **Vanguard Total Bond Market ETF (BND, $73.83)** is a massive fund that ranks as the largest dedicated bond ETF, as well as one of the 15 largest U.S.-listed ETFs of any flavor. About 67 percent of BND's portfolio right now is allocated to U.S. government bonds. Those are as solid an investment as you can get but also offer more-modest yields, so some investors prefer to focus on corporate debt. With more than 2,500 high-quality bonds, the **iShares iBoxx Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF (LQD, $109.61)** is one of the primary ways to do that—without taking on risky loans to fly-by-night companies.
—*with Will Ashworth and Jeff Reeves*

Alexander Glandien

Turbocharge your retirement savings

By Sandra Block

Jack Towarnicky

Kirk Irwin

Jack Towarnicky, an employee benefits consultant, has changed jobs 13 times over the past 30 years, but one aspect of his career has remained consistent: If an employer offered a 401(k) plan, he enrolled and contributed the maximum allowed. His wife, Debbie, a retired teacher, also contributed to her retirement plan. Thanks to their disciplined savings habits, "we have a lifetime of savings in 401(k) and 403(b) plans, and this son of a firefighter is certain to become part of a middle-class millionaire household someday," Towarnicky says.

More than 299,000 participants in 401(k) plans managed by Fidelity Investments, plus 280,000 Fidelity IRA participants, had balances of more than $1 million in the fourth quarter of 2022. A total of 65,494 participants in the federal government's Thrift Savings Plan had more than $1 million in their savings plans as of Sept. 30.

Saving $1 million for retirement may seem out of reach, particularly if you have competing demands on your money, such as student loans and credit-card debt. Inflation presents another hurdle. An analysis by Moody's Analytics found that the average American household is spending an additional $276 a month on goods and services because of higher prices.

With that in mind, it's important to take advantage of all the savings incentives available to you. Perhaps the most generous incentive comes in the form of a matching contribution from your employer. Employers that offer this benefit typically match 3 percent to 6 percent of your pay, but you usually must contribute to qualify. So even if funds are tight, try to contribute at least enough to get the match—otherwise, you're leaving free money on the table.

Uncle Sam offers plenty of incentives, too. One of the most lucrative—and often overlooked—is the Saver's Credit. If you fall within the income limits, you can claim a tax credit of up to $1,000 for singles or $2,000 for joint filers. The credit is based on 10, 20, or 50 percent of the first $2,000 ($4,000 for joint filers) you contribute to a 401(k), traditional IRAs, or a Roth IRA. For 2023, single filers with adjusted gross income (AGI) of $36,500 or less may be eligible. Married taxpayers who file a joint return must have an AGI of $73,000 or less. To determine whether you're eligible, go to *www.irs.gov/help/ita/do-i-qualify-for-the-retirement-savings-contributions-credit*.

As your income rises, you should be able to stash more in retirement plans. In 2023, you can invest up to $22,500 in your 401(k) plan, or $30,000 if you're 50 or older. Contributions are tax-deferred if you invest in a traditional 401(k). If your employer offers a Roth 401(k), contributions are after-tax but tax-free when you take withdrawals in retirement.

Boost your saving

If you can afford to invest even more money—by saving more, reducing your spending, or a combination of both—there are other steps you can take to feather your retirement nest egg.

- Take advantage of retirement plans for self-employed workers. In 2023, you can contribute 20 percent of your self-employed net income, up to a maximum of $66,000, in a SEP IRA. SEP IRAs are widely available at financial institutions that offer IRAs. If you have a side gig, you can contribute the maximum to your employer's 401(k) and contribute to a SEP based on your self-employment income.

- Another option for self-employed savers is a solo 401(k) plan. In 2023, you can contribute up to $66,000 in one of these plans, or $73,500 if you're 50 or older (you can't make catch-up contributions to a SEP IRA). You can stash that much money in your plan because you're making contributions as an employer and an employee.

- Make after-tax contributions to your retirement plan. Some employers allow workers who have maxed out on tax-advantaged contributions to make additional after-tax contributions to the plan, up to a maximum of $66,000. While the contributions won't reduce your taxable income, earnings on your investments are tax-deferred until you take withdrawals. Some plan providers will allow you to convert that money to a Roth 401(k) through what's known as an in-plan conversion.

- Invest in taxable accounts. While it's nice to get a tax break, taxable accounts play an important role in saving for retirement, too. Taxes on long-term capital gains range from 0 to 20 percent, and these accounts offer more liquidity than retirement plans—you won't be penalized if you take withdrawals before age 59½. —**S.B.**

Lower your taxes

By Sandra Block

Getty

You don't need to be a billionaire with a stable of accountants to come up with strategies to reduce the amount of income and savings consumed by federal and state taxes.

Let's start with the amount you have withheld from your paycheck (assuming you're an employee). The average tax refund as of early March was $2,933, and while it's nice to get a check from the IRS every year, there are more-effective uses for your money that will help you build wealth.

If you received a big refund, give yourself a raise by adjusting your withholding. The IRS offers a tool at *www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator* that you can use to figure out how much to adjust your withholding and submit a new W-4 form to your employer. Once you've decreased the amount withheld for taxes, use the extra money to pay off high-interest debt, build up your emergency fund, or increase contributions to your retirement savings.

Unless you filed for an extension, you've probably finished your taxes by now. Don't stash your 1040 form in the back of a file cabinet or file it somewhere in the cloud that you don't plan to visit soon, because this document can also provide a road map for reducing your taxes in the future. It will show you, for example, how much the contributions to your 401(k), deductible IRA, or health savings account lowered your taxable income, which could motivate you to save more in those accounts. Or, if your return shows that you paid taxes on a large capital gains distribution from mutual funds in your taxable account, you may want to shift to more tax-efficient investments.

The majority of taxpayers claim the standard deduction, but even non-itemizers are eligible for a long list of credits and deductions. As mentioned, saving for retirement is one of the most effective ways to lower your taxes—either now, as is the case with pretax contributions, or in the future, as is the case with contributions to a Roth IRA or Roth 401(k). But if you're a parent of a child or college-bound student, there are lots of tax breaks available to you, too, even if you don't itemize.

Do you have a child starting college this year? Save those tuition receipts, because there's a good chance you'll be eligible for the American Opportunity credit. This tax credit is available for up to $2,500 of college tuition and related expenses (but not room and board) paid during the year.

Polish and protect your credit

By Lisa Gerstner

Good credit is key to getting the lowest possible interest rate on loans. A strong credit profile can also help you rent a home, lower your auto insurance premiums, and even land a job.

To judge whether to grant you credit and what rate to offer, lenders often peek at your credit score, a three-digit number derived from your credit history. Many versions of your credit score exist, and you may not have access to the one a lender plans to view. But you can get a good idea of where you stand by using a free site such as CreditKarma.com, which provides VantageScore credit scores from credit bureaus Equifax and TransUnion, and FreeCreditScore.com, which provides a FICO score from credit bureau Experian. Your bank or credit-card issuer may offer free score updates to customers, too.

Standard credit scores run from 300 to 850, and a score of about 750 typically qualifies you for the best loan terms. The most important move you can make to boost your score toward the top of the scale is to pay all your bills on time. Another sizable factor is your credit-utilization ratio—a percentage that reflects the balance on your credit cards as a proportion of your card limits. (The ratio is calculated both on individual cards and in the aggregate across all your card accounts.) The lower the ratio, the better for your score; aim to keep it at 20 percent to 30 percent or less.

Finally, avoid opening several new credit-card accounts at once. Each card application creates a hard inquiry on your credit report, and the presence of several card inquiries in a short time signals to lenders that you may be a risky prospect as a borrower, lowering your score.

Buy a home

By Daniel Bortz

Purchasing a home is a tried-and-true way to build wealth. As you pay off the mortgage, your equity in the property grows. And over the long term, home values have risen.

Still, last year was a tough one for homebuyers. House hunters wrestled with a severe housing shortage, soaring mortgage rates, and rapidly rising home prices. Those conditions pushed some buyers out of the market and forced others to make trade-offs, such as lowering their budgets.

Richard and Marianne Watt, who purchased a four-bedroom house in Silver Spring, Md., in December for $540,000, discovered that rising mortgage rates had cut into their buying power. “We’re fairly conservative in terms of our finances, and because mortgage rates jumped up in such a short span of time, we had to lower our price range from $625,000 to $550,000,” says Richard, an architect.

Rocketing mortgage rates, exacerbated by 41-year-high inflation, squeezed many homebuyers’ wallets last year, with 30-year rates briefly surpassing 7 percent in the fall. Aspiring homeowners—many of whom were already struggling to put together a down payment—suffered: Only 26 percent of buyers in 2022 were first-timers, the lowest share the National Association of Realtors has ever recorded. And last year the median age of first-time buyers reached a record high of 36, up from 33 in 2021.

Mortgage rates will play a big role in the direction of home prices. The 30-year fixed-rate average roughly doubled in 2022, closing out the year at 6.42 percent. “The Federal Reserve raised [its benchmark rate] seven times last year to try to rein in inflation, but how quickly mortgage rates went up caught everyone by surprise,” says Jeff Ostrowski, a mortgage analyst at Bankrate. One piece of potentially good news: Economists who *Kiplinger’s* spoke with say mortgage rates will tick down this year.

Advice for buyers

Look into mortgages with low down-payment requirements.

■ The average down payment across the nation’s 50 largest metro areas clocked in at $62,611, based on data collected from January through October 2022, a LendingTree study found. That was up 35.3 percent from the average based on data collected from January through September 2021. Homebuyers in San Jose shelled out the most money, with the city’s average down payment notching up to $142,006.

■ Many financial experts recommend that conventional-loan borrowers put at least 20 percent down to avoid paying private mortgage insurance, but nearly two-thirds of Millennials plan to put down less, according to a December survey by Real Estate Witch, a website with information for homebuyers and sellers. Fortunately, a conventional loan isn’t the only mortgage product out there.

■ If you’re a first-time buyer, you may be eligible for Freddie Mac’s HomeOne loan program or Fannie Mae’s similar HomeReady program, which permit down payments of as low as 3 percent. There are also zero-down mortgages, such as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development loans for qualified homebuyers in towns with a population of 20,000 or less (or 35,000 or less in special cases), and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) loans for active-duty service members, veterans, and surviving spouses.

■ Talk to a mortgage lender to see what types of home loans you qualify for based on factors such as your income, down payment, and credit score. A lender can also help assess the pros and cons of each loan product. “Loan programs are constantly changing, and the incentives may be different for a detached home versus a condo,” says Wendy Wright, a real estate agent at Keller Williams in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area.

Protect yourself with contingencies.

■ Many buyers waived home inspection and appraisal contingencies in the past couple of years. Buyers are abandoning that strategy, says Denise Supplee, a real estate agent at Long & Foster in Doylestown, Pa. “Contingencies are back in full force,” she says. A November Zillow survey found that more than 4 out of 10 real estate agents said buyers are including more contingencies in their offers.

■ Last October, Jordan Lyndaker and Isela Walldez made an offer on a three-bedroom ranch-style house in Charlotte, N.C., contingent on a home inspection and appraisal. The home appraisal justified the sales price, but the inspection uncovered several problems. The first-time buyers used the inspection results as leverage to negotiate a price reduction.

Find a seasoned real estate agent.

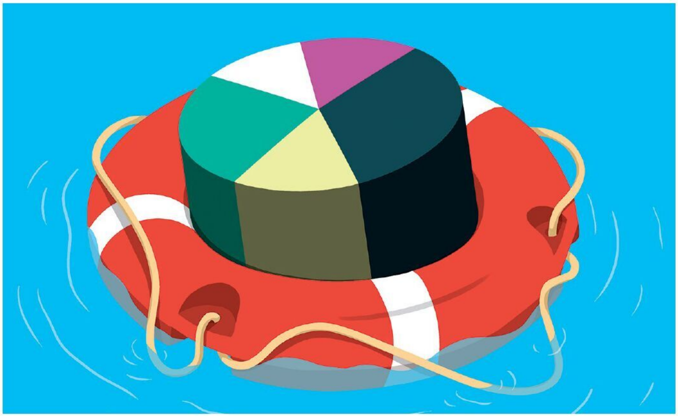
■ It’s been a hot seller’s market since mid-2020, but now that things are shifting, you should pick an agent who also has experience in a more balanced market.

■ That said, you’ll also want an agent who is active on social media—that’s where a lot of home transactions start. Dig into an agent’s online reviews from past buyers. And find someone who is plugged in to your local market and knows what’s coming up for sale. “We see off-market opportunities in our area a lot,” says Jennifer Reddington, a Compass real estate agent in Rye, N.Y. It’s something she always keeps an eye out for, she says. **—D.B.**

Getty

Check your insurance coverage

By Lisa Gerstner



Insurance is a critical tool to shelter you from crushing expenses if assets such as your home or car are damaged or if you are responsible for harm to someone else or their property. Given rising construction costs, it's especially important to make sure that the dwelling coverage in your homeowners policy is adequate to rebuild your home in case it's destroyed, says Jill Roth, executive vice president of insurance agency Ahart, Frinzi & Smith, in Alexandria, Va. "Just to replace a window these days is so much more expensive than it was five years ago," she says. Make sure you update your coverage to reflect renovations that increase the value of your home, too. To calculate your home's replacement cost, multiply local building costs per square foot (check with homebuilders in your area for an estimate) by your home's total square footage.

If you live in an area susceptible to wildfires, hurricanes, or other disasters, take special care that your home and possessions are covered for damage from increasingly intense events. Standard homeowners policies don't cover flood damage, and people in areas at high risk of flooding may have to purchase a separate policy (for more, go to www.floodsmart.gov). Many insurers are backing out of California because of heightened wildfire risk, says Roth. An independent agent—who works with several insurance carriers rather than just one—can help you find a policy. Search for an agent at www.trustedchoice.com.

You need at least enough auto coverage to meet the minimum insurance amounts your state requires for injuries or damage that you cause to other people and vehicles. But you'll need higher coverage levels to have sufficient protection. It's often recommended that a policy should cover up to $100,000 for the medical bills of each person that you injure in an accident, up to $300,000 per accident in liability for bodily injuries, and up to $100,000 to repair other drivers' cars and property that you damage, says John McCormick, editorial director of Insurance.com. To fine-tune your own liability coverage amounts, consider your life stage, says Roth. She would typically recommend higher coverage limits for someone who is well established than for a young adult who is just starting out with few assets.

Umbrella insurance provides extra liability coverage in case your homeowners or auto insurance claims exceed the limits of your existing policies. It even protects you if you're sued for slander or libel. If you have significant assets or an above-average likelihood of being sued, or you are otherwise vulnerable to exhausting your regular coverage—say, because you own a swimming pool or have a teen driver in the family—an umbrella policy is worthwhile. You'll pay about $150 to $350 a year for $1 million in coverage.

Educate the next generation

■ As your children start their own wealth-building journeys, teaching them to be good stewards of their money will pay off in spades. A record 47 percent of parents are having money conversations with their kids at least once a week, according to the 2022 Parents, Kids & Money survey from T. Rowe Price. Those conversations can start earlier than you may expect. While grocery shopping with young kids, for example, you can discuss how the price of food affects what you buy and whether you choose to eat at home or dine out, says Roger Young, a CFP with T. Rowe Price. "Many decisions we make every day involve money," he says. As the kids get older, you can introduce topics such as saving for college and compounding interest.

■ The T. Rowe Price survey also shows that three-fourths of parents give their kids an allowance, with 59 percent requiring children to earn it. Offering kids a chance to make decisions about money can give them real-life practice with money management while the stakes are low, says Young. Cash is generally a better tool than, say, funds accessed via a debit card.

■ Using tax-friendly financial accounts for your kids can get them off to a strong start, too. Money that you put into a 529 college-savings plan grows tax-deferred, and withdrawals that you make for qualified higher-education expenses are not taxed. Once your child starts earning money from work, such as a part-time job in high school, you can open a custodial Roth IRA for him or her. Contributions (including any of your own funds that you add on behalf of your child) can't exceed the amount the child earns and are subject to the standard annual limit on IRA contributions, which in 2023 is $6,500. **—L.G.**

Alexander Glandien

Plan your estate (and share the wealth)

By Sandra Block

Getty

You've saved enough for a comfortable retirement, with something left over for your heirs and favorite charities. Are you finished? No way. Unless you take steps to protect your estate, your legacy could be decimated by taxes, probate costs, and family dissension.

Start by making sure you have the basics covered. You need a will, and you should designate a power of attorney for your finances and a health-care proxy. These individuals will be empowered to manage your money and make decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated. You should also periodically review beneficiaries for your life insurance policies, bank accounts, and retirement savings plans to make sure they reflect any life changes, such as the death of a spouse or a remarriage.

Next, consider whether you need a revocable living trust. A trust will let you avoid probate and ensure that your money goes to the people you choose.

You don't need to wait until you're gone to share your wealth with your favorite charities, and contributions made while you're alive could lower your taxes. If you're 70 1/2 years old or more, you can donate up to $100,000 a year from your IRAs to charity via a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), and after you turn 73, the QCD will count toward your required minimum distribution. A QCD isn't deductible, but it will reduce your adjusted gross income (AGI), which along with lowering your federal and state tax bill could reduce taxes on items tied to your AGI, such as Social Security benefits and Medicare premiums.

Donor-advised funds are another tax-advantaged way to donate money and securities in your taxable account. These funds, offered by most major financial firms, let you contribute cash or securities, claim the deduction, and decide later how you want to distribute the money to charity.

Finally, take advantage of a provision in the tax code that permits you to help family (and friends) while reducing the size of your estate. In 2023, you can give away up to $17,000 per person to as many people as you'd like without having to file a gift tax return. Estates valued at up to $12.92 million ($25.84 million for a married couple) are exempt from federal estate taxes. But unless Congress acts, the exemption will drop to $5.5 million in 2025. In addition, 12 states and the District of Columbia impose an estate tax and some have much lower exemptions than the federal level.

Hire a pro

By Lisa Gerstner

■ A financial adviser can alert you to opportunities as you build wealth—for example, notifying you if it's a good time to convert your traditional IRA to a Roth or to shift your investment portfolio's asset mix. An adviser can also guide you through decisions such as how much to save for retirement compared with other goals, how to minimize taxes on your investments, and how to make a debt-payoff plan. Even if you don't use a financial adviser on a regular basis, getting occasional help may be useful—especially if you're going through a transition such as getting married or divorced, having a child, or preparing to retire.

■ A certified financial planner (CFP) can create a holistic financial plan for you. CFPs must act as fiduciaries when providing financial advice, putting their clients' best interests first. You can look for one at www.letsmakeaplan.org. If you need tax help, a certified public accountant (CPA) may prepare your tax return or assist with tax strategies. At www.aicpa.org/forthepublic, you can search for a CPA who has the personal financial specialist (PFS) credential. A chartered financial analyst (CFA) specializes in investments; look for one at www.cfainstitute.org/en/membership/directory. An adviser with any of those credentials must undergo rigorous education and testing.

■ You may be charged a percentage of assets managed, through a subscription or retainer, or on an hourly basis. A fee-only financial planner does not collect commissions by selling financial products to clients and may be less subject to conflicts of interest. At www.napfa.org, you can search for a fee-only adviser in your area. If you prefer a fee-only planner who doesn't require asset minimums, you can look for one who charges by the hour at www.garrettplanningnetwork.com or who provides monthly retainer services at www.xyplanningnetwork.com.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Bottoms Up and the Devil Laughs: A Journey Through the Deep State

by Kerry Howley

(Knopf, $28)

Kerry Howley's "extraordinary" new book is about the slow death of true privacy, said **Jennifer Szalai** in ***The New York Times***. Howley focuses on individuals who have tangled with today's national security state and lost—people such as Reality Winner, Edward Snowden, and the "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh. But as she recounts the stories of these dissidents, Howley "also writes about the strange experience of living, and how it gets flattened into data that can be turned into portraits of static beings—creatures who would be unrecognizable to ourselves." Her subjects made themselves vulnerable to the government's characterization of them when they, like most of us, entrusted the internet with personal information. Her complaint is not that these people are innocent. It's that their digital trails misrepresent them.

Winner back home in Texas, in 2021

Christopher Lee/Redux

"To the extent that *Bottoms Up* has a main character, it's Winner," said **Peter C. Baker** in ***The New Yorker***. The improbably named Texas native was working as a defense contractor at age 25 when she leaked a five-page classified document about Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election to the left-leaning website *The Intercept*. Winner eventually received the longest-ever prison sentence for violations of the century-old Espionage Act, and the evidence used against her included jokes she'd made online that, shorn of context, painted the former Air Force enlistee as rabidly anti-American. Howley portrays Winner instead as a passionate young woman who was trying to figure out her place in the world, and who continues to be many people at once. "When Reality is on the page, we feel the intimacy of a novel."

"Howley's capacity for incisive empathy extends to those whom most would dismiss as kooks," said **Tarpley Hitt** in ***Bookforum***. She "finds something of value even in QAnon," as well as the subject of the viral 2014 video that gives the book its title—a woman who had assembled scattered data points to argue that Monster Energy drinks are spreading satanism. That woman, after all, hopes to vanquish Satan. The "only real villains" in Howley's book are the intelligence agents, prosecutors, or reporters who are heedlessly or willfully blind to other individuals' complexity. You might assume that any of us would be less at risk of being unfairly tarred given all the digitized self-documentation we leave behind, in texts, photos, browsing histories, and more. The problem is, "we don't get to choose who listens or which parts they hear."

Novel of the week

Wandering Souls

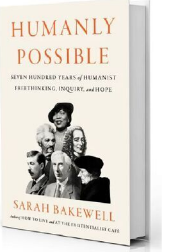
by Cecile Pin

(Holt, $27)

"Cecile Pin's debut novel is a tender-hearted story about the least tender of experiences," said **May-lee Chai** in the Minneapolis ***Star Tribune***. In the aftermath of the U.S. war in Vietnam, three siblings, ages 16, 13, and 10, flee the country and quickly become orphaned. Living in refugee camps first in Hong Kong, then in England, the children grow up longing for family. Pin's love for her young protagonists, whose journey may have been inspired by her mother's, is "apparent on every page." At first, the narrative appears to be straightforward, said **Stuart Miller** in the ***Los Angeles Times***. But it soon becomes "intricately layered," as Pin weaves in news clippings and other voices to widen the perspective. Some chapters are narrated by a ghost. Later, the oldest sibling's daughter enters as a narrator, offering hope that the wounds of trauma can heal. A book focused solely on hardship "might have caused people to turn away." Instead, Pin leaves us "feeling admiration for what these refugees endure, survive, and achieve."

Humanly Possible: Seven Hundred Years of Humanist Freethinking, Inquiry, and Hope

by Sarah Bakewell (Penguin, $30)


HUMANLY POSSIBLE
SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS of HUMANIST FREETHINKING, INQUIRY, and HOPE
SARAH BAKEWELL
Author of HOW TO LIVE and AT THE EXISTENTIALIST CAFE

"It is not humanly possible to include everything in a book like *Humanly Possible*," said **Dominic Green** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. As its subtitle indicates, historian Sarah Bakewell's witty but incisive survey of the school of thought known as humanism spans seven centuries. And because humanism can describe any attempt to understand human life or ethics without resorting to the supernatural, "a history of humanism is a history of everything, or at least a history of the modern West." Bakewell, the author of *At the Existentialist Café*, tends to champion humanist thinking even as she acknowledges when it has led the West astray. Still, *Humanly Possible* is "a book of big and bold ideas" that's "readable and worth reading, whether you agree with it or not."

Fittingly, given humanism's focus on lived experience, Bakewell builds her account on a series of potted biographies, said **Kathryn Hughes** in ***The Sunday Times*** (U.K.). She begins with Petrarch and Boccaccio, who sought to bury the so-called Dark Ages by proposing a moral philosophy built on Cicero's pre–Christian era prescription for a virtuous life. Other of Bakewell's humanist heroes include Michel de Montaigne, David Hume, poet and critic Matthew Arnold, and novelist George Eliot, who all promoted humanist ideals. Bakewell "finishes this bracing book by urging us to draw inspiration from these earlier men and women."

"*Humanly Possible* is not just sweetness and light," said **Jane O'Grady** in ***The Guardian***. "It shows how often humanist attempts to counteract war, oppression, and persecution, have been in vain." Too often, humanists implicitly championed only humans who also happened to be white, male, educated, and able-bodied. But Bakewell presents humanism, with its compassion for others and faith in science, free thinking, and progress, as a work in progress rather than a perfected creed. At a time when the very survival of humanity is threatened, she succeeds in making an embrace of humanist thinking seem "more necessary than ever."

The Book List

Best books…chosen by Don Winslow

Crime novelist Don Winslow is the best-selling author of the Cartel *trilogy and* Savages. *His new novel,* City of Dreams*—book two in a planned trilogy—chronicles the aftermath of a bloody war between rival New England criminal empires.*

The Long Goodbye by Raymond Chandler (1953). If there was ever a better private eye novel written than this one…well, there never has been. Raymond Chandler defined the noir hero for us: "Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean." I have that quote taped to my desk. It has guided me for many a protagonist, including Danny Ryan in my current trilogy.

The Road Home by Jim Harrison (1998). Perhaps the most underrated American novel, it belongs on a shelf with Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Hemingway, and Twain. It's the story of a family on the plains of western Nebraska, its relationship with Native Americans, and its struggles to come to grips with history. Complex, beautiful, and powerful.

The Friends of Eddie Coyle by George V. Higgins (1970). Maybe the best crime novel ever written, certainly one of the most realistic. This story of a small-time New England criminal takes on the proportions of an epic tragedy. The setting is real, the characters are real, the dialogue is superb and memorable, and it's one of the rare great novels also made into a great film.

Middlemarch by George Eliot (1871). I reread Eliot's classic while writing my own trilogy because I wanted to study how the greats handled large themes and multiple characters over the course of years. What Eliot does, maybe better than anyone, is to observe her characters with both keen, unyielding perception and also with compassion.

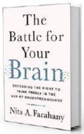
Nobody's Fool by Richard Russo (1993). Another writer who belongs in the American pantheon. His writing flows like the rivers that often run through his fictional towns. Russo captures small-town life perfectly, without ever resorting to stereotypes or calling attention to his wonderful way with words.

When the Sacred Ginmill Closes by Lawrence Block (1986). Lawrence Block has been such an influence on my work. Such a stylist, such a gritty poet. And what a first line: "The windows at Morrissey's were painted black." I once sat next to Block at a book event for two hours and was too much in awe to speak to him. And I'm still in awe.

Also of interest…in matters of the mind

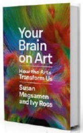
The Battle for Your Brain

by Nita Farahany (St. Martin's, $30)


The Battle for Your Brain
Defending the Right to Think Freely in the Age of Neurotechnology
Nita A. Farahany

Mind-reading devices are coming, and "the possibilities are both thrilling and disturbing," said Christine Rosen in *The Wall Street Journal*. In this look at neurotech and where it's headed, Nita Farahany, a professor of philosophy and law, describes a near future in which advertisers can infiltrate our dreams, traumatic memories can be erased, and employers can monitor workers' thoughts. She's "no Luddite." Nor is she blind to potential dangers. "We need more guides like her to think through the challenges ahead."

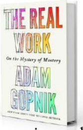
Your Brain on Art by Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross (Random House, $30)



This book about how engagement with the arts promotes well-being is at once "fascinating and frustrating," said Grace Wade in *New Scientist*. The authors, a researcher at Johns Hopkins and a top designer at Google, provide the building blocks to understand how art affects our bodies and minds. Their survey is also "packed with interesting insights." Unfortunately, much of the authors' reporting "lacks the scientific rigor needed to elevate the book from good to great."

The Real Work

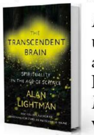
by Adam Gopnik (Liveright, $30)



Adam Gopnik's charming new book will make you rethink mastery, said Adam Thirlwell in *The New York Times*. Seeking an underlying formula, the *New Yorker* writer throws himself into boxing, drawing, stage magic, and other pursuits. A few commonalities do emerge. Mastery begins in learned patterns, he concludes, and is expressed through improvising with them. His "most profound" insight, though, is that we inevitably seek mastery to engage with others.

The Transcendent Brain

by Alan Lightman (Pantheon, $26)



Alan Lightman's "well-written but ultimately unsatisfying" new book attempts an interesting exercise, said Denis Alexander in *The Washington Post*. The *Einstein's Dreams* author wishes to reconcile his materialist view of consciousness with his own experiences of the transcendent. But once he shows that brain mechanics can explain why we sense the sacred in encounters with beauty and nature, he unnecessarily rules out that such feelings provide potential insight into the nature of our world.

Author of the week

Matthew Pratt Guterl

Matthew Pratt Guterl has been a passenger on Noah's Ark, and he gives the experience mixed reviews, said **Casey Schwartz** in ***The New York Times***. In his new memoir, *Skinfolk*, the 52-year-old professor of American and Africana studies at Brown University recounts how his idealistic parents adopted four children in the 1970s to create a family that his father likened to Noah's assemblage. "With two of every race," he would say. Matthew's parents and he and one younger brother were white. Two siblings were Black and two Korean. But as a mixed-race family in a largely white New Jersey town, the Guterls attracted constant scrutiny that Matthew, his parents' first child, found difficult to endure. "The very first problem I confronted was that of my family, as a social problem in a small town," he says. "It gave me a set of problems and questions to work through for the rest of my life."

Guterl, as a child, wasn't just a frequent witness to racist insults aimed at his siblings. Schoolmates targeted him too, calling him "N----- Lips" so often that he underwent cosmetic surgery to thin his lips at 13. He also struggled with having to measure up to an adoptive brother who was almost exactly his age. "It was never easy for me, when my parents adopted a better, smarter, more handsome version of myself," he says. "Better at chess, better at video games, better athlete, a better conversationalist. I stopped trying for a long time." He's hopeful that the book will trigger more conversation within the family about their past. But he admits that the book's existence scares him. "I'm unnerved that I wrote it," he says.

Michael Lionstar, Wendy Chitwood

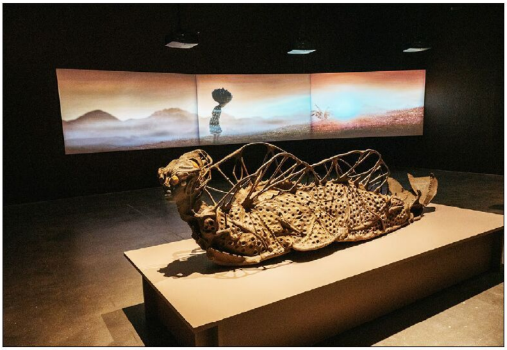
Review of reviews: Art & Music

Exhibit of the week

Wangechi Mutu: Intertwined

New Museum, New York City, through June 4

Wangechi Mutu, over the past two decades, "has built a universe that's all her own," said **Alex Greenberger** in ***ArtNews***. Step inside the New Museum this spring and you will be immersed in her world. In the early 2000s, the Kenyan-born, then–Brooklyn-based artist won fame for her collages, "and it's the collages many viewers will be here to see." But the 115 works on display include sculpture, video, and installation, in which the female figures of the collages have transmogrified into hybrid humans, creating a genre of their own, a "beautiful body horror" that "enlists grotesquerie as a means of empowerment." Mutu is only 50, yet this second major New York City museum survey in 10 years feels fully earned. "She is the rare artist whose work has grown only more convincing as it's become increasingly surreal."



'The Glider' stretches out under the glow of a Mutu video.

Charlie Rubin/The New York Times/Redux

Her reputation-making works on paper "haven't lost any of their initial impact," said **Peter Plagens** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. The 2003 collage that gives the show its subtitle depicts two figures who have the bodies of young women but the heads of "less-than-friendly dogs," each of which has its teeth clenched on one end of something resembling a belt. Like so much else here, it's "grotesque, brilliantly imaginative, carefully crafted, and beautiful in a jarring way, with the forces of African nature and Western artifice doing an impassioned pas de deux." The museum presents Mutu's sculpture too theatrically, favoring darkened galleries and spotlights, and the work itself is "dramatic almost to a fault." Still, her sculpture is "varied and inventive, with materials ranging from cast bronze to red soil, synthetic hair, and glass beads, and in sizes from conventional table-top scale to 30 feet long (*Sleeping Serpent*, 2014)."

"Fantastic as they may be," Mutu's human-animal-alien hybrid beings come across as "solid and real," said **Roberta Smith** in ***The New York Times***. "It's as if she wants to make as tangible as possible a world free of divisions between races, genders, and species." But her vision is hardly Pollyanna-ish. Her collages and videos often highlight the exploitation and resilience of Black women, and much of her work underscores that two of the forces that connect us all are disease and violence. "There doesn't seem to be anything Mutu can't manage," whether providing a cappella vocals for the short video *Amazing Grace* or mixing charcoal and red soil to create "brilliant, complex" figures such as 2021's *The Glider*, a winged reptile-human. This show will surely be one of 2023's most memorable. "It reveals Mutu to be one of the best artists of her generation, using her innate versatility to demonstrate diversity as essential to life."

Boygenius

The Record

★★★★

Phoebe Bridgers, Julien Baker, and Lucy Dacus are more than gifted solo artists, said **Spencer Dukoff** in ***Consequence***. As the band Boygenius, they're "a trio of best friends ready to carry the torch for a new musical generation." Five years ago, they knocked out an EP in four days and were acclaimed as an indie supergroup. All three have since become bigger names. But it's clear they intended this follow-up to be "a capital-A album" and tribute to friendship. When the trio isn't playfully referencing influences such as Nirvana and Crosby, Stills & Nash, said **Chris Willman** in ***Variety***, "they're making music so good that it doesn't seem untoward to elevate them to the same big leagues as their heroes." On "Not Strong Enough," a piece of "jangle pop" that might be the record's most commercial track, "you get the sense of how delighted these three talents are to be bouncing off one another." Give the whole album a spin. "You could play it a hundred times and still enjoy decoding how their voices and personas diverge and recombine."

Chlöe

In Pieces

★★☆☆

Chlöe Bailey's first solo album "feels manufactured to the point of sterility," said **Heven Haile** in ***Pitchfork***. The Grammy-nominated singer has made some otherworldly music as one half of Chloe x Halle—the wholesome, gospel-trained wunderkind sister duo mentored by Beyoncé. Chlöe remains "one of the greatest vocalists of her generation," as she proves on the "awe-inspiring" bridge of "Pray It Away," this record's lead single. But now that she's 24, the fledgling pop star is working so hard to present herself as something other than a Bible-toting good girl that by the end of this "soulless" collection, "we have no clue who the mononymous singer actually is." Chlöe's decision to include a duet with the notorious woman-abuser Chris Brown is also problematic, said **Mosi Reeves** in ***Rolling Stone***. Still, "give her credit for trying to turn her growing pains into prickly, sometimes enjoyable art." Teen stardom is rough, and Chlöe's "fascinating albeit uneven" contribution to the '90s R&B revival is buoyed by her obvious songwriting and vocal talents.

A new classical music app

Finally, there's a better way of listening to classical music, said **Ben Cohen** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. Apple Music subscribers now have access to a years-in-the-making app that solves "a big, big problem." Until now, the experience of engaging with classical music through any major streaming service "would make Yo-Yo Ma want to smash his cello." There can be hundreds of recordings of any piece, obscured by varied identifying data, including opus numbers, movement titles, and the names of orchestras, conductors, and soloists. By codifying that messy metadata and offering curated playlists, Apple Music Classical makes it easy to browse more than 20,000 composers, 117,000 works, and 5 million tracks. "While using the app on a recent morning, I encountered the music of Hildegard von Bingen, a 12th-century composer of Gregorian chants," said **Javier C. Hernández** in ***The New York Times***. "Hildegard's music could easily be lost in the chaos of streaming. But in the Apple universe, it gets fresh life."

Review of reviews: Film & Stage

Air

Directed by Ben Affleck

(R)

★★★☆

The Cinderella tale of an iconic sneaker

“As breezy as its title,” Ben Affleck’s new sports drama somehow turns the story behind the birth of Air Jordans into “an entertaining trip down memory lane,” said **Cary Darling** in the ***Houston Chronicle***. The actor who plays Michael Jordan is barely seen, as Affleck chose to focus on the flailing Nike executive who had to fight to convince his boss as well as Jordan’s family that a partnership between the unproven rookie and an underdog sneaker company could be something special. Much of the humor derives from the fact that 1984, from 40 years’ distance, “feels like the Stone Age.” Matt Damon plays the hungry Nike exec, and delivers “one of the best performances of his career,” said **Odie Henderson** in ***The Boston Globe***. Still, as Jordan’s coolly demanding mother, Deloris, Olivia Davis “rules every scene she’s in,” and the two co-stars are surrounded by other actors doing excellent work, including Chris Messina as Jordan’s abrasive agent and a “hilarious” Affleck as Phil Knight, Nike’s ex-hippie CEO. Background details such as the soundtrack’s “excellently curated needle drops” may seem to be mere set dressing, said **Richard Whittaker** in ***The Austin Chronicle***. But *Air* “subtly trades on 1980s nostalgia for surprisingly subversive ends,” casting the era as a period of growing exploitation. A decade after winning an Oscar for *Argo*, Affleck remains a director “who can disguise a powerful parable as giddy, crowd-pleasing entertainment.” *(In theaters only)*

Damon’s lucky middleman

A Thousand and One

Directed by A.V. Rockwell

(R)

★★★☆

A Harlem mother fights for her son.

The “tough, beautiful” new drama starring Teyana Taylor “isn’t just worth seeing—it’s worth celebrating,” said **Ann Hornaday** in ***The Washington Post***. In her first leading film role, the dancer, actress, and R&B singer plays Inez, a hairdresser who in 1994 is fresh out of jail when she kidnaps her 6-year-old son to rescue him from an abusive foster family. Inez wants to give young Terry the loving home she never had, and, in a career-defining performance, “Taylor embodies Inez’s hustle and bristling energy with compulsively watchable charisma.” Despite the movie’s focus on one household, “it’s an epic story,” said **Richard Brody** in ***The New Yorker***. Played by three actors, Terry ages from 6 to 17, as Inez, along with a boyfriend who becomes her husband, work to sustain a family life in a fast-changing New York City. Much conspires against them—poverty, heavy-handed policing, gentrification, past traumas—and the movie works like “a cinematic X-ray” in revealing the layers of their hostile environment. “None of this comes off as didactic,” said **Justin Chang** in ***NPR.org***. Instead, we watch as the once spirited Inez grows “visibly wearier” over the years. But there’s more to these characters than their circumstances, and the story ends on a boldly ambiguous note. “I left the movie thinking about what might lie ahead for Inez and Terry, and feeling grateful for the time I’d spent in their company.” *(In theaters only)*

Taylor: An eye-opening turn

Life of Pi

Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre, New York City ★★★☆

“Yann Martel’s novel *Life of Pi* might appear impossible to bring to the stage,” said **Christopher Isherwood** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. It is the story, after all, of a teenager adrift on a lifeboat with only a zebra, an orangutan, a hyena, and a tiger as co-passengers, and those four animals must be brought to life. “Against those mighty odds,” the adaptation now playing on Broadway “delivers a mostly exhilarating evening of theater.” The production won five Olivier Awards during its run in London, and here it overcomes some leaden dialogue with the help of an “astonishing” lead actor and “spectacular feats of puppetry” that “rival even the long-admired wonders of *The Lion King*.”

Abeysekera battles the Bengal.

The animal puppets “prowl and canter and leap with astonishing style,” said **Alexis Soloski** in ***The New York Times***. And while Hiran Abeysekera is an excellent Pi, the tiger, whose name is Richard Parker, “makes the more indelible impression.” Controlled by three puppeteers, the big cat is “at once beguiling, gentlemanly, and quite dangerous.” In the account that Pi gives of how he lasted 227 days at sea after a shipwreck, he credits the carnivore with teaching him to survive. As we watch his tale unfold, there are times when the stagecraft is so dazzling, “a person might have to clap her hands across her mouth to stop from oohing.”

Unfortunately, the technical marvels are “stranded in a story awash with platitudes,” said **Jackson McHenry** in ***NYMag.com***. Like the novel, this *Pi* peddles “a woo-woo interpretation of faith” as well as “bromides about the power of storytelling.” A hammy line about man being the most dangerous animal is repeated three times. Pi at one point insists that hearing his tale will make listeners believe in God. “I can’t say it did, but it did reinforce my faith in puppetry.” Whenever an animal dies in this production, the human puppeteer walks away from the carcass, “like a soul leaving a body,” and “there’s more heft in that gesture than in any of *Pi*’s more self-conscious moralizing.”

Amazon, Focus Features, Evan Zimmerman

Television

Streaming tips

Recent music documentaries...

Travelin' Band
Creedence Clearwater Revival enjoyed a brief run as one of the world's most popular rock acts. Jeff Bridges narrates this snapshot of the band during its first European tour—a fine showcase for the bayou-inspired wailing and songwriting of frontman John Fogerty. *Netflix*

Take Me to the River
Director Martin Shore's deep dive into New Orleans' musical history is notable for performances by the late Dr. John and the Neville Brothers, who have since lost two members. *$4 on Amazon Prime*

The Return of Tanya Tucker
When Tanya Tucker rose to country music stardom in the 1970s, she broke all the rules. Grammy winner Brandi Carlile recently wrote an entire album for Tucker to coax her idol back into the studio. This inspiring documentary blends a look back with an intimate chronicle of the two artists' collaboration. *$6 on YouTube*

Jason Isbell: Running With Our Eyes Closed
This new behind-the-scenes chronicle of the making of the 2020 album *Reunions* is best when it concentrates on the push-and-pull between Isbell and his wife and bandmate, Amanda Shires. *HBO Max*

Dio: Dreamers Never Die
Ronnie James Dio had a voice like a demon, perfect for a long career in heavy metal that peaked when he replaced Ozzy Osbourne as Black Sabbath's lead singer. Offstage, he was a genuinely good guy, as this head-banging portrait documents. *Paramount+*

Meet Me in the Bathroom
Based on a book by Lizzy Goodman, this documentary revisits the early 2000s New York City rock scene that gave birth to the Strokes, LCD Soundsystem, and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. *Showtime*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Am I Being Unreasonable?
Daisy May Cooper, who won a BAFTA award and the hearts of British comedy fans with *This Country*, has found a new series tailored to her talents. She shines here as an oversharing middle-class English mum who's stuck in an unfulfilling marriage and surreptitiously grieving over the gruesome death of a man she had an affair with. Selin Hizli plays a new mother in the village who's looking like a badly needed new bestie until Cooper's Nic trusts her with her secret. *Available Tuesday, April 11, Hulu*

Florida Man
What happens in Florida...is often crazy. That proves true for Edgar Ramirez, who in this new series plays an ex-cop with a gambling problem who sleeps with Delly, a gangster's girlfriend, and then takes a job to find her when she vanishes. But Delly, played by Abbey Lee, has a scheme that could make them both rich. Expect standard Sunshine State noir, with plenty of guns, gators, and crooked eccentrics, including Anthony LaPaglia as the protagonist's father. *Available Thursday, April 13, Netflix*

The Last Thing He Told Me
The day he vanished, he left two cryptic notes and a bag of cash. In this series adaptation of a recent No. 1 best-seller, Jennifer Garner plays the wife left behind, forced to dig into her husband's secrets while trying to finally win the trust of her teenage stepdaughter. The man they both loved turns out not to be who they thought he was, and their hunt makes them potential targets of a criminal syndicate. With *Mare of Easttown*'s Angourie Rice and *Game of Thrones*' Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. *Debuts Friday, April 14, Apple TV+*

Cephas Jones in 'Blindspotting': Born fighting

Blindspotting
There's nothing like prison to derail a chance at a happy family. The soul-stirring Jasmine Cephas Jones returns in the second season of this delightful series spin-off of the 2018 movie, playing Ashley Rose, the put-upon baby mama of an imprisoned drug pusher. The story picks up after the pair has tied the knot in a ceremony at San Quentin. Family visitation days come next, but hardly get Ashley closer to her dream of a stable life or stop the intense monologues and superb inner-world sequences that give the series a unique energy. With Rafael Casal and Helen Hunt. *Friday, April 14, at 9 p.m., Starz*

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel
Midge Maisel has been around the world and back again. The fifth and final season of the award-winning series begins with Rachel Brosnahan's housewife turned comedian back in New York City, where it all began. After some hard times that included being deservedly kicked off a tour, Midge gets a jolt to her career at Carnegie Hall and decides to aim high again. Bet on her to make it this time. *Debuts Friday, April 14, Amazon Prime*

Other highlights

Seven Kings Must Die
The final chapter of the series *The Last Kingdom* arrives in the form of a feature that follows Uhtred's bloody quest to unite England. *Available Friday, April 14, Netflix*

A Black Lady Sketch Show
Robin Thede and her many alter egos, collaborators, and guest stars assemble for a fourth season. *Friday, April 14, at 11 p.m., HBO*

100 Foot Wave
Surfers return for Season 2 of chasing the world's biggest swells. *Sunday, April 16, at 8 p.m., HBO*

GO DE AREA
SPUES SU
DE TELÉFONO
Hader in the cooler

Show of the week

Barry
Barry Berkman is behind bars. Given the awful things we've seen Bill Hader's character do since he arrived in Los Angeles to carry out a hit only to warm up to a bunch of acting students, his current plight feels inevitable. With eight episodes left, redemption seems off the table. But the prospect of revenge is very much in play, now that Barry knows it was his acting coach Gene, played by Henry Winkler, who turned on him. Inexplicably, you root for both men, just as you do for Sarah Goldberg's Sally, despite her own turn to the dark side. *Sunday, April 16, at 10 p.m., HBO*

Starz, HBO

• *All listings are Eastern Time.*

Food & Drink

Chinese chicken salad: One of America's finest inventions

A riff on a favorite riff

Americans love to order Chinese chicken salad, and "I suppose I am no different," says Noah Galuten in *The Don't Panic Pantry Cookbook* (Knopf). When the pandemic shut the world down in 2020, I was craving the gold-standard version of the salad that a Los Angeles restaurant, Feast From the East, has been serving since 1981.

I developed the recipe below to answer my craving, and "it is, admittedly, quite far from the Feast from the East version, and even further away from anything remotely Chinese." But that's because it's my idealized salad, with romaine, shredded cabbage, and pulled leftover chicken all tossed in a ginger-citrus-sesame dressing. "Instead of sugar, the dressing gets its sweetness from some grated apple and fresh mandarins. Then, to literally top it all off, it gets a healthy dusting of sizzling, crispy, sliced almonds, toasted in sesame oil and a bit of *shichimi*"—the Japanese spice mix.

Recipe of the week

Ginger-cilantro chicken salad

2½ cups chopped romaine lettuce (bite-size pieces, about 1 small head)
½ medium head red cabbage, finely shredded or thinly sliced
2 cups pulled chicken (about 1 large breast or 2 thighs), fridge-cold
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
1 apple, cored and coarsely grated
1 carrot, coarsely grated
1 seedless mandarin or tangerine, peeled and pulled into segments
½ cup sliced almonds
Ginger-sesame dressing (recipe below)
1 tbsp sesame oil
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp shichimi, or to taste

In a large bowl, combine lettuce, cabbage, chicken, cilantro, apple, carrot, and mandarin and toss together. Add dressing to salad and toss until everything is fully coated. Portion salad into two bowls (or into one big serving bowl, if you'd like) and set them aside.

Place a skillet over medium heat and add almonds to dry-toast, stirring occasionally. Once almonds begin to become fragrant and are browning a bit (this will take 3 to 4 minutes), add sesame oil and salt to skillet and stir constantly. If oil or almonds begin to smell bitter or are turning black, reduce heat. Once you have partial browning (at about 1 to 2 minutes), sprinkle in shichimi and continue stirring for 30 more seconds.

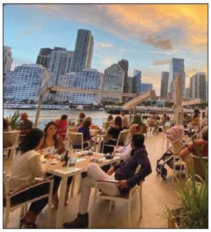
Immediately coat top of salad with hot almond mixture—it might sizzle a little as it lands—and serve right away. Makes two main-dish salads.

Ginger-sesame dressing

1½ tbsp sesame seeds, freshly toasted or purchased already roasted
1½ tsp finely grated fresh ginger
3 tbsp fresh lime juice
3 tbsp sesame oil
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp tamari
Salt (optional)

In a small bowl, combine sesame seeds, ginger, lime juice, sesame oil, olive oil, vinegar, and tamari and whisk vigorously. Taste for seasoning and add salt if needed. Use dressing immediately or store in refrigerator for a few days. Makes about ¾ cup.

Miami: The year's hottest food city?



The patio at La Mar

"Miami might just be the most exciting culinary destination in the country," said Meghan Palmer in *Bon Appétit*. The *Bon Appétit* 2023 Food City of the Year is a unique melting pot, with a food culture that is mixing the ever-present contributions of the city's Caribbean and Latin American populations with a recent flood of top-tier culinary talent from around the world. Below are three restaurants that deliver "dining experiences you can't find anywhere else."

La Mar This sleek restaurant feels like the beating heart of Brickell, a downtown neighborhood that serves as Miami's skyscraper-studded internationally influenced urban hub. "A globally inspired haven of Peruvian cuisine," it sets itself apart with "flawlessly executed" ceviches, luxe ambience, and Biscayne Bay views. Chef Diego Oka's defining dish mingles Peruvian, Japanese, and Italian influences, combining fluke, Parmesan, *leche de tigre*, and basil oil. *500 Brickell Key Drive*

Cafe La Trova "The best way to immerse yourself in the lively, welcoming spirit of Cuban culture is through food, and Cafe La Trova is the place to do it." Though it's just three years old, it feels like it's been a part of Little Havana forever. Go for the nightly live music, the conga dance parties, "the best daiquiris in town," and the cooking of James Beard–winning chef Michelle Bernstein. *971 SW 8th St.*

Ariete Coconut Grove, with its palm trees, marina, and wandering peacocks, is the Miami of visitors' imagination, and it provides a perfect backdrop for chef Michael Beltran's elevated and inventive Cuban American fare. "Ariete is where you want to go to celebrate something special, because the food is some of the most exquisite you'll have during your trip." *3540 Main Highway*

Kristin Teig

Spirits: Japanese whisky

Japanese whisky has become wildly popular over the past decade, causing prices to jump, said Jonah Flicker in *Wine Enthusiast*. New brands and new iterations have popped up, though, providing alternatives to classic expressions that have become more elusive. Here are three to seek out if you can't locate an old favorite.

Mars Iwai Tradition Single Malt ($50). A "great starter" for anyone new to Japanese whisky, this mellow single malt is aged in sherry, bourbon, and wine casks and has great depth.

Nikka Taketsuru Pure Malt ($84). Nikka blends two single malts to create a whisky "distinct from any other." It combines sherry notes with a touch of peat.

Suntory Hibiki Harmony ($111). This blended spirit combines "all of Japanese whisky's best practices." Sip it neat or enjoy it in a delicious highball.

MARS
岩井
IWAI
TRADITION
Mars Whisky

This week's dream: A father-son pilgrimage to rural Ireland

Though it's fun to learn about one's family heritage through ancestry websites, "what every story really needs is a journey," said Josh Condon in *Robb Report*. My father likes to boast that he's "all the way Irish." But sometime during the century-plus since his ancestors arrived in America, the details of our family history faded away entirely. When I realized that I soon might become the keeper of that story, I decided to arrange a trip to Ireland as a gift to my father—one that would uncover the family's past and knit it to our current lives. That's how we found ourselves in County Clare, seated across from Lorna Moloney, the forensic genealogist at the five-star Dromoland Castle hotel. To prepare for our arrival, she had put weeks of work into piecing together 700 years of Condon history.

Condon Castle, a family landmark with a bloody history

The next morning, we count ourselves grateful that Moloney gifted us a bag of strong black tea, because a heavy gray sky "clings to the hilltops like a wet sheet." Our first stop is an abandoned centuries-old round stone fortress in County Cork that we have learned is our ancestral home. Condon Castle, which sits in a cow pasture and rises seven stories, was raided in 1643 by an army of royalists who massacred 38 men, women, and children trapped inside. Today, its roof is gone, but it still has its "murder hole"—once used to shower invaders with rocks and molten lead. "Come for the ancestry, stay for the castle vernacular."

After a damp day spent visiting churches and cemeteries in Fermoy, Ballylooby, and Clogheen, Dad and I warm up by drinking late into the night with raucous locals. The next morning, we sip golden drams at J.J. Corry's 400-year-old stone barn. Later, we pick our way across the Burren, a swirling karst landscape where prehistoric farmers built tombs "in the sobbing wind." On the Cliffs of Moher, Dad and I look out on the Atlantic, the same dark ocean a widow named Catherine Condon crossed with her children in 1880. "I'm not thinking about the past, but the present, and the man standing next to me. And I'm thinking of this adventure, a tale we'll bring home with us."

At Dromoland Castle (dromoland.ie), a roots package stay starts at $1,765.

Hotel of the week

Katara Towers, the hotel's home

Fairmont Doha

Doha, Qatar

Book a stay at the Fairmont Doha, and "you're in for something really special," said Stella Rosato in *Condé Nast Traveller* (U.K.). The "ultra-stylish" hotel occupies one of the towers of Doha's new signature building, which resembles crossed scimitars—Qatar's national crest. And Fairmont has raised its already high standards. The world's tallest chandelier hangs in the hotel's lobby, and the friendly hostesses are dressed in "couture-worthy" gowns. Even entry-level rooms are "seriously spacious," and I had a suite that was "all marble, gold trim, and butter-soft Italian leather." It opened onto "the most enormous hotel terrace I've ever seen."

fairmont.com; doubles from $329

Getting the flavor of...

A book lover's favorite weekend

When you walk into the New York International Antiquarian Book Fair, "you may initially feel dizzy," said Paula Marantz Cohen in *The Smart Set*. More than 150 vendors from around the world gather at the Park Avenue Armory, and their priceless wares touch on "every conceivable genre and subject." The fair, which this year runs April 27–30, is one of my favorite events. The stalls showcase many rare and beautiful books, which visitors can generally handle freely. Also for sale are maps, posters, photographs, letters, historical documents, old board games, pulp paperbacks, and other printed ephemera, and the vendors, who "range from young and hip to old and snooty," are eager to talk about their objets d'art. "I find these little lectures delightful." And when a seller is short on information, a knowledgeable customer often fills in the gaps. Standing in the cavernous armory, the only question is what to look at first. "An illuminated manuscript from the Middle Ages? An original George Gershwin score with his notations? A first edition of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*?"

Fossil hunting in New Brunswick

Deep history is emerging from the shores of New Brunswick, said Robin Catalano in *National Geographic*. The Canadian province, which shares its Bay of Fundy coastline with Maine, sees the world's highest tides rush in and recede twice a day, and the dramatic low tides are revealing "one of the richest caches of fossils in the Western Hemisphere." Until recently, neighboring Nova Scotia was more famous for its fossils. But as erosion continues, the less-visited province on the bay is turning up even older paleontological treasures. During the Carboniferous Period, New Brunswick was a biodiverse rain forest where dragonflies the size of falcons flew between giant lycopods and ferns. Citizen scientists have recently made significant discoveries, including footprints left by tiny protodinosaurs. The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Region offers good beachcombing, as do the red cliffs at Dennis Beach and Waterside Beach. Farther north, Hopewell Rocks is popular for its sea stacks. Any discovery must be reported to the New Brunswick Museum. If you find something significant, "you might see your name recorded in the museum."

Is Mexico safe for travel?

"Mexico is a big, varied country, not a monolithic destination," said Nikki Ekstein in *Bloomberg*. When the State Department released a spring break travel advisory last month, "broadcast news disseminated scary stories of illegal drugs and gang crime," prompting travelers to cancel bookings. Nothing has changed, though: Popular destinations such as Oaxaca, Mexico City, and the Yucatán remain safe to visit. Most of Mexico's 32 states bear a Level 2 advisory, the same warning applied to Italy, France, and Spain. Seven states are classified as Level 3 ("reconsider travel"), while six are listed as Level 4 ("do not travel"). Chances are, though, those places aren't on your itinerary. "The touristic zones," says crime expert Romain Le Cour, "are protected like islands."

Wikipedia

Barbara Poma
Founder,
onePULSE Foundation

AFTER TRAGEDY AND HATE, BARBARA VOWED TO CONTINUE A LEGACY OF LOVE.

Barbara co-founded Pulse Nightclub to create a space of joy and love for the LGBTQ+ community in Orlando. And in the aftermath of the tragic shooting at Pulse, Barbara knew she had to preserve that love. She established the onePULSE Foundation to honor the victims, survivors, and first responders. The love that Pulse represented lives on through the Foundation's scholarships and community work.

love
has
no
labels

ad
COUNCIL

Join Barbara in the fight
for LGBTQ+ acceptance now at
LoveHasNoLabels.com

This week: Homes full of color

Dennis Carbo

1 ◀ Lyme, Conn. Two circa-1760 houses make up this pastel-painted five-bedroom home: the site's original gambrel Colonial and a center-chimney Colonial moved from a town nearby. The house has antique details, a library, a tavern, a music room, and a connecting eat-in kitchen building with double-height ceiling, marble floors, arched windows, and French doors. The 6.8-acre wooded property above the Connecticut River includes a garden courtyard with fountain and a post-and-beam barn garage. $1,695,000. Paul Smyth, William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, (860) 867-6620

2 ▶ Albion, Calif. The red walls of the Westmar Estate are set off by the green bluff it stands on, overlooking the blue Pacific. Built in 2002, the two-bedroom house features a bright yellow living room and primary suite, each with a wall of windows framing the sea, and an azure chef's kitchen with round island. The 8.8-acre property has a lavender field, a garden with sculptures and fountains, a greenhouse, and a three-car garage. $3,950,000. Sarah Schoeneman, Mendo Sotheby's International Realty, (510) 418-0070

3 ◀ Palm Springs, Calif. Once home to Magda and Zsa Zsa Gabor, this 1964 three-bedroom mixes glamorous patterns with dramatic colors. The house has a gourmet kitchen with wine refrigerator and Hungarian rotisserie; a living room with original chandeliers, mirrored walls, and grand piano; and an owners' wing with luxurious bath, dressing, and makeup rooms. The Little Tuscany property has a covered veranda, a pool with views, a patio with a firepit, and desert landscaping; downtown is 10 minutes' drive. $3,545,000. Conrad Miller, Avenue 8 Inc., (760) 464-9559

Best properties on the market

4 ▶ St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. The subtle colors inside and out of this Mediterranean-style hillside villa harmonize with the tropical land and sea that surround it. The four-bedroom home features an open main living space with vaulted ceilings, arched windows, ocean-view sitting area, and chef's kitchen, and a separate downstairs one-bedroom apartment. The gated landscaped property includes a terrace with pool, a workshop, and 150 feet of Hull Bay waterfront. $2,700,000. Anna Adair, Island Living Collective/Luxury Portfolio International, (340) 642-1758

5 ◀ Garden City Beach, S.C. This sea-blue house with sand-colored interiors stands one block from the ocean, between Murrells Inlet and the Atlantic. The elevated three-story, six-bedroom home has ocean and marsh views, water-resistant wood floors, multiple decks, and a gourmet kitchen open to a dining area with floor-to-ceiling windows. The back porch leads to a brick patio, lawn, and pool with hot tub, and an outdoor kitchen with built-in grill. $1,750,000. Frank Streeter, Realty One Group Dockside, (843) 997-1410

Steal of the week

6 ▶ Asheville, N.C. A butterfly roof tops this two-toned blue house with yellow-accent door, set on a non–through street in West Asheville. The two-story, three-bedroom 2020 home features an open layout, wood floors, stainless kitchen appliances, main-level primary suite, and upstairs bedrooms and office. Outside are a front lawn with potential garden beds, fenced backyard, and screened back porch with views of mature trees; shops and restaurants are walking distance. $539,000. Ann Roth, Keller Williams Professionals, (828) 254-7253

The news at a glance

The bottom line

- The number of available U.S. jobs dropped below 10 million in February for the first time in nearly two years. Job openings still far outnumbered the 5.9 million unemployed people seeking work.
The Wall Street Journal

- Only 48 percent of U.S. workers say they use all their vacation days, according to a new survey from Pew Research Center. Those who don't say it's because they don't need it, or they worry about falling behind at work or feel badly about co-workers carrying their load.
Bloomberg

- Wrestling empire WWE and the company that runs Ultimate Fighting Championship are combining to create a $21.4 billion sports entertainment company. The deal puts the value of Endeavor Group Holdings' UFC and WWE at $9.3 billion.
Bloomberg

- From 1970 to 2021, the median U.S. income increased 7.7 times, the median rent by 11 times, and the median home sales price by 18 times. The fastest increases came in recent years, especially during the wild pandemic housing market.
The Hustle

- A survey of 2,067 college students and recent graduates found that 16 percent hope to work for Google. The next-most attractive job was the federal government (6 percent), followed by Apple (5 percent) and Disney (2.2 percent).
Axios

- The number of students at community colleges has fallen 37 percent since 2010, or by nearly 2.6 million. High school students taking dual-enrollment courses now make up nearly a fifth of community college enrollment.
Associated Press

Oil: OPEC cuts production as demand falls

Saudi Aramco's Ras Tanura refinery

Oil prices jumped this week after the oil cartel OPEC+ announced a surprise production cut, said **Derek Brower** in the ***Financial Times***. The group, which includes Russia and is led by Saudi Arabia, made the announcement "outside a formal OPEC+ meeting, suggesting an element of urgency" after oil prices dropped sharply in the past month. The White House in October "accused Saudi Arabia of effectively siding with Russia" to prop up oil prices "when OPEC+ last announced a formal production cut of 2 million barrels per day." The announcement of an additional 1 million barrels per day cut sent crude prices up 6.3 percent, the steepest one-day increase in more than a year.

The cuts send a signal about the future of oil, said **David Fickling** in ***Bloomberg***. In the short-term, this "knocks bullish forecasts for oil consumption" in 2023 on their head. "What's more telling, though, is what the announcement says about long-term demand." OPEC+ countries are swimming in profits, "but unlike previous booms, they're not reinvesting that money in their future." Saudi Arabia has announced $1.3 trillion in spending by 2030, not for expanding oil production but for projects "diversifying the economy away from oil production." OPEC+ wants to squeeze more cash out of the oil market while it can. This is "a capitulation to oil's decline."

Litigation: J&J offers $8.9 billion talc settlement

Johnson & Johnson agreed this week to pay $8.9 billion to settle tens of thousands of lawsuits related to claims that talc in its baby powder and other products was linked to cancer, said Dietrich Knauth and Mike Spector in Reuters. The deal involves a controversial bankruptcy maneuver, the "Texas two-step," in which the company created a subsidiary to "offload the talc liability." The subsidiary then filed for bankruptcy, letting the claims be adjudicated by a bankruptcy court. J&J tried a similar maneuver in January with a $2 billion settlement offer, which was rejected by an appeals court.

Subsidies: TSMC plant caught in fight over sales tax

Opposition to a one-half-percent sales tax in Arizona is jeopardizing construction of a $40 billion chip manufacturing plant, said Eliza Collins in *The Wall Street Journal*. The 37-year-old tax has "funded most of the highway system," but Republicans in the state's legislature are threatening to cut it because of a requirement "that more than a third of the tax revenue go toward mass transit." The standoff is threatening impede construction of a semiconductor plant north of Phoenix by Taiwan-based chip giant TSMC. The company requested "additional transportation infrastructure built around its site, including lane expansion and a new highway interchange."

Tesla: Sharp price cuts create sales surge

Tesla's price cuts at the start of the year significantly boosted sales, said Jack Ewing in *The New York Times*. The EV maker said this week "it delivered nearly 423,000 vehicles from January through March, up from 405,000 in the last quarter of 2022." It was also a 36 percent increase from the same period last year. Separately, a former Tesla employee was awarded $3.2 million in punitive damages after being "subjected to repeated racist offenses" while working at Tesla's factory in Fremont, Calif. A different jury in 2021 had awarded him $137 million, but the judge reduced the figure.

Fallen star: Charges for student loan advice founder

Charlie Javice, the 31-year-old founder of a startup that claimed to help college students apply for loans, was criminally charged this week with defrauding JPMorgan Chase out of $175 million, said Annika Kim Constantino in *CNBC.com*. The Justice Department said Javice "dramatically inflated the number of customers" that her company, Frank, actually had "in a scheme to 'fraudulently induce' the bank to acquire

Google says fewer lunches, no staplers

The world's fourth most valuable company is getting stingy, said Jennifer Elias in *CNBC.com*. "In a rare companywide email," Google this week announced a round of cost-saving measures, cutting back on its fitness offerings, laptop replacements, and even its office supplies. The $1.3 trillion company said it would start handing out Google-made Chromebooks to non-engineering employees who need a new laptop instead of pricier Apple MacBooks. Its famed cafeterias, known for serving lobsters and hand-rolled sushi, may close on Mondays and Fridays, when fewer workers come in to the office. A separate document said that "staplers and tape would no longer be provided," though a Google spokesperson said that notice was mistaken. Google parent Alphabet said in January it was cutting 12,000 jobs, or about 6 percent of its staff, in the largest layoffs in the company's history.

Reuters, Getty

Labor: Taking the cuffs off irate workers

New rules let ex-employees spill complaints.

Employers will have to think twice before attempting to buy the silence of laid-off workers, said **Emily Peck** in ***Axios***. "Overly broad non-disparagement clauses—which some companies require workers to sign to receive severance benefits—are now unlawful," according to a recent ruling by the National Labor Relations Board. The ruling even applies retroactively to "agreements signed before the board's decision," potentially unmuzzling millions of private and public workers. The decision ended a case brought by furloughed hospital workers in Michigan who had been told to keep quiet if they wanted higher payouts. The NLRB says restrictions around such clauses were the long-standing norm before "the Trump-era labor board relaxed the laws around severance agreements." Agreements prohibiting the "spilling of trade secrets" remain lawful, and supervisors, who are not protected by the National Labor Relations Act, may also remain subject to gag clauses.

Elon Musk, be warned, said **Jaimie Ding** in the ***Los Angeles Times***. When Musk bought Twitter last October and promptly slashed nearly half its workforce, workers "had to sign away their right" to "speak negatively about Twitter, its management, or Musk" to receive their severance packages. "This was a prime example of the kind of gag order the NLRB was trying to address." Employers too often "view those who speak out as disgruntled snitches," said **Ariella Steinhorn** and **Amber Scorah** in ***Fortune***. But why is it a bad thing to bring more "transparency into people's experiences and opinions of work"? It could prompt a "better salary or benefits for others" and induce companies to weed out office bullies, bad bosses, and toxic workplace dynamics. This is ultimately in the interest of a good business, even if it's painful in the short term.

Before airing your grievances, you still need to check with an attorney, said **Ella Ceron** in ***Bloomberg***. The NLRB says employers can still proffer or maintain severance agreements "if they do not have overly broad provisions." What's an "overly broad" clause? There is wide room for interpretation. Some non-disparagement clauses focus "on defamation, while others bar employees from talking badly about their time at a company in general."

However the ambiguities get resolved, "when government limits the scope of bargaining, employers and workers often both lose," said ***The Wall Street Journal*** in an editorial. In this case, workers will probably get fewer severance payments. It's not unusual for a cash-strapped company to offer severance to "encourage a few employees to pursue other work." They might request a confidentiality agreement, so recipients don't "spread the word to current staff or to the media." Now the layoffs will still happen, just without the pay package.

What the experts say

A plateau for Apple and Microsoft?

The Nasdaq 100 just entered a bull market, which means it may be time to sell, said Ben Levisohn in *Barron's*. So far in 2023, the index is up 21.9 percent. "Why dump what's working?" It's become too top-heavy. "Apple, for instance, has surged 25 percent this year, and its weight in the S&P 500 has grown from a problematic 6.4 percent to a troublesome 7.6 percent." Microsoft, too, has an outsize weight in the market. "Many portfolio managers have a 5 percent cap on the weight of stocks they can own, so every time Apple surges, they need to scale back." That puts downward pressure on the stock. As tech stocks have risen, other indexes have barely budged. That doesn't mean a drop in Apple, Microsoft or the Nasdaq is imminent, but the risk is there, so consider taking profits now.

Surviving mid-career job loss

A mid-career layoff can be especially traumatic, especially if it's been a while since you've been in the job market, said Alicia Adamczyk in *Fortune*. With that said, career coaches say it's important for the newly unemployed to jump back into the applicant pool as quickly as possible. "A lot of people want to be really choosy and want only what they had, and they spend two years out of the job market," said one HR expert. Consider cross-industry roles that can sustain you, because a big career gap "can be potentially detrimental to future opportunities." It's also important to "be proactive" and use your network. That includes LinkedIn, where you shouldn't be shy "about posting that you are open to opportunities."

Investing in celebrity-backed brands

It's not easy to be like actor Ryan Reynolds, said Chris Bryant in *Bloomberg*. This "handsome, kind, and humorous family man has become astronomically wealthy from side hustles." He's a part-owner of Mint Mobile, which was recently acquired for $1.35 billion by T-Mobile. Before that, Reynolds' Aviation Gin brand was bought by Diageo for $610 million. Now more "celebrities are clamoring for equity in the companies they're promoting." But long-term success for celebrity-backed companies often turns out to be elusive. Despite Oprah Winfrey's close involvement, Weight Watchers is now "worth less than when she invested in 2015." Jessica Alba's Honest Co. has shrunk in value from $2 billion to $160 million.

Charity of the week

Sandy Hook PROMISE

Sandy Hook Promise **(www.sandyhookpromise.org)** was founded in Newtown, Conn., after the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, with the mission of saving children from other acts of gun violence. The organization conducts training for both children and adults on the indicators, both in school and online, of potential school shootings. The foundation teaches children how to recognize warning signs on social media, and how to speak up to trusted adults. Other programs address the root causes of school shootings, focusing on empathy and communication with classmates to alleviate feelings of social isolation. The foundation's efforts are designed to reduce bullying in school, and its classes have reached 8 million school kids.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group's highest rating.

Shutterstock

Elon Musk: Remaking Twitter in his own image

Twitter's algorithm promotes Musk's own tweets.

Twitter's verification overhaul this week was, like most things at the company, executed chaotically "and subject to the whims of its new CEO," said **Jon Porter** in ***The Verge***. "April 1 was the day Twitter said it would begin winding down its legacy verification program"—the well-known blue checkmarks—and users and brands would have to begin paying $8 per month to keep their badge. Many organizations and celebrities refused to pay, and after a tense few days, the deadline passed, and nothing much changed. There was only "one high-profile example of a previously verified account losing its badge, and that's *The New York Times*," which owner Elon Musk singled out for announcing it would not pay. To create further chaos, the Twitter bird logo on the site was inexplicably changed to a picture of a shiba inu, canine symbol of the digital token Dogecoin.

So much for Twitter's "town square" ideal, said **Ina Fried** in ***Axios***. The site has become "an intrigue-filled palace that Musk seeks to protect." He tells users it's a pay-to-play site; meanwhile, Musk's personal account has its own special category—revealed in information Twitter has released about its algorithm—to give his tweets unmatched prominence. Musk is ruining Twitter, said **Zeeshan Aleem** in ***MSNBC.com***. Now, "blue checkmarks can be distributed to anyone willing to open their wallet," completely hollowing out their meaning as an important verification tool. As usual, though, he's only hurting himself. Users aren't signing up for subscriptions. "Why would anyone rush to pay for verified badges when he's systematically destroyed their meaning?"

Twitter is making a big push on subscriptions because its ad revenue has fallen by 50 percent, said **Aisha Counts** and **Kurt Wagner** in ***Bloomberg***. Advertisers have "expressed concern about Musk's erratic decision-making" and his own behavior on the site, and many of them haven't returned since suspending their campaigns in October. "From September to October of last year, the top 10 advertisers on Twitter spent $71 million on ads, according to estimates from Sensor Tower. In the past two months," that figure has fallen 89 percent. Musk still envisions Twitter growing to be "worth more than 10 times its current value of around $20 billion," said **Tim Higgins** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. His long-range plan is to morph Twitter into a "super app" that's "at the center of users' financial lives," where they can "send money to each other, earn interest on deposits, and much more." Already, Twitter has filed paperwork for this plan with the U.S. Treasury.

For now, "the general Twitter experience is getting increasingly worse," said **Delia Cai** in ***Vanity Fair***. Twitter's badge system was "never a complete safeguard against disinformation," but it did become a mental shortcut for figuring out "who seemed to matter on the internet." That online hierarchy of journalists, academics, and celebrities rankled conservatives, who saw the blue check as a prize for "self-important liberal elites." Now Musk has changed that dynamic, partly because he sees himself "as a noble god who will rebalance the scales of the internet"—and partly because he's desperate for "paying customers."

U.S. farms depend on global trade

Adam Minter
Bloomberg

Turning away from free trade is destroying farmers' livelihoods, said Adam Minter. Since 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement was enacted, yearly U.S. agricultural exports have nearly quadrupled, from $46 billion to a record $196 billion in 2022. The farm trade also supports more than 1 million jobs, "over half of which are non–farm-related (such as trucking)." However, farm exports are expected to shrink to $183 billion in 2023, and a new report from the Department of Agriculture reveals that U.S. leadership is "eroding." The U.S. global market share of corn has fallen from 71 percent in 2006 to 30 percent. In wheat, it was 40 percent in 2000; today, it is a record-low 10 percent. "Farm country knows there's a problem." In 2020, 70 percent of surveyed U.S. farmers "believed exports would grow over the coming five years." In February, the number was 33 percent. The negative data can be traced directly to the Biden administration's resistance to negotiating new trade agreements. "That's a proven mistake—one that's magnified by every free trade agreement negotiated by a U.S. competitor." Hostility to free trade is "rooted in a belief that it leads to unfair outcomes for workers." But right now, farmers are working hard—with little help from our trade policy.

Small banks drive small business

Allison Schrager
City Journal

Smaller banks need protection, said Allison Schrager. After the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the failures of First Republic and Signature, there is more pressure on small and midsize banks than ever. Depositors are fleeing to big banks, which they believe to be safer in the event of a bank run. Silicon Valley Bank was retroactively deemed "too big to fail" by the federal government. The confusion over what is insured has made small banks appear vulnerable. But if regulation and policy "ultimately drives small- and medium-size banks out of business, we will lose something valuable and important." According to Goldman Sachs, small banks—or those with less than $250 billion in assets—account for half of all commercial and industrial lending, 45 percent of consumer loans, 60 percent of residential mortgages, and 80 percent of commercial mortgages in this country. "Without small banks, what will the future of credit be for more modest borrowers?" Even if the current crisis passes without more bank failures, smaller banks will likely face stricter regulation. That's especially burdensome for small banks "with fewer resources to devote to compliance." In 2008, market concentration was the biggest risk to the financial sector. Today, we're making the same risk worse.

Reuters

The record executive who signed Madonna

Seymour Stein
1942–2023

Seymour Stein cut the biggest deal of his life while lying in a hospital bed. It was the early 1980s, and the record executive was awaiting heart surgery when he checked out a demo tape by a little-known New York City club singer. In short order he summoned her to his room and signed her in his boxer shorts, and Madonna went on to sell more than 70 million records on Stein's Sire Records. Stein signed scores of other acts who shaped the sound of the late '70s and '80s, including the Ramones, Talking Heads, the Pretenders, Depeche Mode, Ice-T, and the Replacements. In a career spanning six decades he was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of recordings and song lyrics and a brash style he acknowledged could put people off. "Being liked was not my goal in life," he said. "My business was turning great music into hit records."

Born Seymour Steinbigle, he grew up in Brooklyn, where from an early age he was "obsessed not only with popular music but with the minutiae of chart positions and obscure B-sides," said *The Times* (U.K.). After high school he was hired at *Billboard*, where he wrote reviews and helped compile the Hot 100 chart. He then worked for a pair of small labels before starting Sire with songwriter and producer Richard Gottehrer in 1966. Initially it was "little more than a cult label," licensing British blues and prog-rock records for U.S. sales, said the *Los Angeles Times*. Then Stein's wife, Linda, came home one night raving about a band she'd seen at the grungy downtown club CBGB, and Stein signed the Ramones and released their 1976 debut. Radio programmers wouldn't touch it "with a toilet brush," he later said, but its influence was massive, and "gave Stein focus for Sire," which would now embrace "punk and its offshoots."

Stein "continued to fly around the world hunting for new talent well into his 70s," said *The Guardian*. He came out as gay in 2017, saying "cultural pressure from his Jewish background" led him to date women and marry while secretly seeing men. He retired in 2018, and published a memoir, *Siren Song*. "I'm not a musician and I'm not a singer, not even in the shower," he said that year. But "I think time has shown that I have pretty good ears."

The YA writer who took trans teens mainstream

Julie Anne Peters
1952–2023

Getty (2)

Julie Anne Peters did not set out to make waves. The author of 2004's *Luna*, the first-known mainstream young adult novel to have a transgender character, began her literary career in the 1990s writing humorous, uncontroversial kids' books with titles such as *The Stinky Sneakers Contest* and *How Do You Spell Geek?* But in the early 2000s, her editor asked her to write a story about a same-sex relationship between two teenage girls. While Peters initially balked at writing a story that might draw unwelcome attention to her own lesbian identity, she eventually agreed to take on the challenge—and was amazed at the reaction to 2003's *Keeping You a Secret*. "What filled my inbox," she later said, "were letters from young readers. Love letters. Coming-out stories. Horrible stories. Wonderful stories. Thank-you letters."

Born in Jamestown, N.Y., and raised in Denver, Peters took years to find her calling, said *The New York Times*. She "tried teaching fifth grade" in the 1970s but decided she was doing a dismal job. She worked as a computer programmer for a decade before getting the urge to write fiction, and in 1991, editor Megan Tingley rescued one of her manuscripts from the slush pile. A few middle-grade novels later, Peters expanded her ambitions with 2000's *Define "Normal,"* said *Publishers Weekly*. The story, which followed an unlikely friendship between two girls from troubled families, was inspired by "the kids she had worked with as a teacher." Tingley encouraged her to mine her own experience further, arguing that "LGBTQ+ readers needed their own Judy Blume." That encouragement yielded *Keeping You a Secret* and then *Luna*, in which the narrator observes that her older brother had wanted to be "born right, in the body of a girl." It became a finalist for the National Book Award for young people's literature.

Peters' LGBTQ-themed books "made her a frequent target of criticism," said *The Washington Post*. In 2021, Texas state Rep. Matt Krause circulated a list of 850 books he deemed inappropriate for school libraries because they might provoke "discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress" in students. Peters was represented on the list more than any other author, with nine books. She wore the distinction proudly, insisting that she had never written to scandalize, but because "so many stories aren't being told that need to be told."

The restaurateur who brought the world the soup dumpling

Yang Bing-yi
1927–2023

Yang Bing-yi spent decades perfecting a dish that struck millions of patrons as a culinary miracle: paper-thin steamed dumplings filled with piping-hot pork and truffle soup. In 1958, Yang and his wife, Lai Pen-mei, opened Din Tai Fung, a four-table restaurant in Taiwan, with a menu inspired by the foods of Shanghai. At the time, *xiao long bao* weren't widely known, but Din Tai Fung's signature dish helped the restaurant grow to 250 seats and eventually become a global chain, with more than 170 locations across 13 countries, including the U.S. A Hong Kong location has been awarded a Michelin star five times. Under Yang's exacting watch, Din Tai Fung's dim sum became famously consistent, each weighing precisely 21 grams, with 18 elegantly hand-pleated folds.

Yang was born in Shanxi province, China, and fled in 1948 after "civil war erupted on the mainland," said *NPR .com*. In Taiwan, he worked as a deliveryman for a shop that sold cooking oil. He married Lai, a co-worker, and eventually they opened their own oil shop. As packaged oil devastated the business, they began selling noodles, too, and later, steamed soup buns.

The soup dumpling's "secret," said *The New York Times*, "is to mix a scoop of cold, gelatinized broth with the meat or vegetable filling." After the wheat dumplings are steamed in bamboo baskets, the broth melts, unleashing a rich flavor. In 2013, Din Tai Fung sold 28 million soup dumplings in Taiwan alone. By 2021, with Yang and Lai's sons running the business, what had started as a tiny shop had global revenues of $150 million. Yang said he was "in pursuit of excellence every day" with every single *bao*.

Echoes of gunfire

In Sutherland Springs, Texas, a gunman with an assault rifle slaughtered 26 people in minutes, said **Silvia Foster-Frau** *and* **Holly Bailey** *in* **The Washington Post***. For survivors, the suffering never ends.*

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, TEXAS—Multitudes of purple freckles dot Morgan Workman's legs, arms, chest, and cheekbone—tiny shards of metal from bullets and shrapnel that struck her as she worshiped in her church more than five years ago. The fragments are leaching lead. Workman suffers from toxicity symptoms, including body pains, fatigue, depression—and has been told by doctors that she probably can't have a baby.

"It feels like it was yesterday, like we're still going through all of it," Workman, 25, said. "Very uncommonly does a Sunday go by that I don't think: 'What if? How would I get out? Would I get out? Would I be able to do something?'"

Workman was shot twice when a gunman opened fire in the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, slaying worshipers gathered for Sunday service. More than two dozen of her fellow parishioners and closest friends died in the Nov. 5, 2017, attack. Twenty others were wounded, sentenced to lives of unending pain and illness.

David Colbath, shot nine times, has high levels of lead in his blood. He can barely stand or use his hands without pain. Kris Workman, Morgan's brother-in-law who was shot twice, was paralyzed from the waist down and told by doctors he'd probably never walk again or conceive children. John Holcombe and his now 12-year-old daughter, Evelyn, cling to each other for support. His pregnant wife, Crystal, had shielded Evelyn from the gunman and was killed along with Evelyn's three siblings and grandparents.

Some of the survivors have moved away from Sutherland Springs. Some have contemplated suicide. The physical impact of the bullets and the number of lives lost were magnified by the shooter's chosen weapon. Devin Patrick Kelley, wielding a Ruger AR-556 rifle, fired 450 military-grade bullets inside the church within minutes, all of which left the barrel at a velocity of around 3,200 feet a second.

Pastor Frank Pomeroy and his wife, Sherri, at their daughter Annabelle's grave

Lisa Krantz/The Washington Post

The devastation was not comparable to damage from a handgun or shotgun. Doctors who treated the victims likened the wounds to something they might have seen on a battlefield. "The high-velocity firearm injuries, when they come in, you're missing body parts, and there's bleeding," said Lillian Liao, a trauma surgeon at University Hospital and UT Health in San Antonio. "You don't see muscle. There's just bone and skin and missing parts."

Five years on, many in the working-class town of 600—nestled in the dusty-road countryside an hour southeast of San Antonio—still attend services every Sunday. They pray in a new church built next to the old one. The sanctuary, funded by donations from around the country, has fortified walls and security cameras. Many of the congregants carry guns on their hips for protection.

Every Sunday, they chime a bell in the church's tower where 25 portraits of the lost hang high, along with an image of angels to honor Crystal's unborn child. Children hobble through the pews with leg braces, men carry colostomy bags that sometimes leak. Some, like Morgan Workman, are marked by sprays of odd-looking freckles. "I want to be the person that's happy and positive even if they're struggling. I want to be smiling even if I'm having a really hard day. I want to find what's good in the day," Workman said. "But some days, the birds, the breeze—that's all you can find."

AS COLBATH'S BLOOD pooled on the church's red carpet, as his friends were shot and killed around him—he thought of his children, and his savior. Eyes shut, he recalled whispering again and again: "I love you, Morgan. I love you, Olivia. I love you, Jesus."

The first gunshots sounded like fireworks. On the lawn, 26-year-old Kelley—clad in body armor, his face concealed by a mask of the Marvel character the Punisher—was firing his rifle at the outside walls and front door of the tiny church. As parishioners ducked for cover, Kelley stormed the church and stalked the aisles, shooting people at point-blank range. He fired 196 times inside the church in 16 separate bursts, according to a report based on recovered bullet casings and analysis of a church video. The dead ranged from age 1 to 77.

Terry Snyder, a longtime Texas Ranger among the first on the scene, later described seeing victims where bullets had "disintegrated the skull"—including a toddler's. Testifying in a civil trial, Snyder twice choked up on the witness stand. "Even the survivors, the wounds that I saw…it was unbelievable, just the damage that the bullet would cause," Snyder said.

Kelley fled the scene and killed himself hours later. Police later said they believed the gunman was targeting some relatives who attended the church because of an ongoing "domestic situation." One of the relatives, his mother-in-law, Michelle Shields, was not at church that day, but her mother, Lou White, was. She was killed.

In testimony as part of a lawsuit against the U.S. Air Force for failing to report Kelley's criminal history to the FBI, John Holcombe described the horror he saw when he emerged from the sound booth. “The kids were just lying there piled up with their faces blown off,” Holcombe testified. “I couldn’t even see [Crystal’s] beautiful face anymore. It was just a crater.”

The past is so precious to Holcombe that he has frozen time. A wastebasket filled with Crystal’s crumpled papers and empty Dr Pepper cans still sits on one side of his bed. He’s kept a foam Polar Pop cup, lid and straw intact; it was the last drink she sipped on. The registry for the baby they never had is still online.

Holcombe lost both of his parents in the attack. His brother and niece were also killed. Only Evelyn, his youngest daughter, and Philip, his oldest son, survived. Holcombe wasn’t shot, but fragments of shrapnel were lodged in his back and picked out later at the hospital. Evelyn, 7 at the time, was saved by her mother, who threw herself on top of her.

Holcombe has never stopped questioning why he survived instead of the other members of his family. “It would be better if I had gone and Crystal would’ve stayed,” he said.

He can’t dwell for too long. He has an energetic, wild-haired middle-schooler to feed and entertain and put to bed every night. Evelyn pulls him into the present in the moments when he smells Crystal’s purple robe for too long, willing her scent to return to the fabric. “Daddy, grab my feet!” she called to him on a recent afternoon, interrupting him as he examined the faint crayon writings of Megan and Emily, her deceased sisters, on the living-room blinds.

Evelyn lay on a blue blanket on the floor, her blond hair splayed around her as she pushed her feet out into the air so that he could pull her around like a human mop. Soon, Philip would come home from work and be her next target for attention. Later, John confessed: “If they weren’t here and it was just me—I would be gone.”

Evelyn loves Subway sandwiches that ooze with mayo and bounding on her trampoline in the backyard. Her mind wanders quickly from subject to subject. But she can talk almost encyclopedically about mental health and depression. “People don’t know how to handle their depression,” Evelyn said on a recent afternoon. “Depression isn’t just a feeling, and you can’t just snap out of it. It’s like…a hatred that’s sucking inside of you and you have no happiness, no joy, and you don’t know what to do, you’re lost.”

After losing three siblings and her mother, she struggles to imagine herself as an adult. She shivers at loud noises. When Evelyn attended a church sleepover on a recent Friday with a handful of other girls, she ran up to another parishioner who survived the shooting and cupped her hands over her ears silently, her eyes pleading: She wanted earmuffs to dull the sounds of the other girls’ loud screaming.

On the day of the shooting, Evelyn was found underneath her mother. She was covered in so much blood and body matter that a rescuer initially thought she might be dead. Over the years, Evelyn has slowly opened up to Holcombe about what she saw and heard that day—how Evelyn locked eyes with Kelley and heard her mother’s pleas for mercy. “One thing that she shared with me was that Crystal begged Kelley not to kill the kids,” Holcombe testified at trial. “And so he shot them…in front of her. He shot them first.”

SEPT. 25, PASTOR Frank Pomeroy, who’d led services at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs for more than 20 years, and who held the congregation together during the biggest tragedy of their lifetimes, took to the pulpit one last time.

The service would be his last one as pastor before retirement. He wore a light blue collared shirt and one of his signature quirky ties—this time, his Winnie the Pooh and Tigger one.

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, And take me home, What joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration, And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Despite his injuries, Kris Workman still leads the band.

Sherri Pomeroy sat proudly in the front row, tears in her eyes and overwhelmed by the significance of the moment. It had taken years for the horror of the shooting to catch up with Sherri. The couple were not at church that day. Frank had been in Oklahoma City, taking a firearms class, and Sherri had been in Florida working for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Their 14-year-old daughter, Annabelle, was there. She was killed.

In the hours and days after the attack, the Pomeroys had little time to grieve. They served as spokespeople for mourning families and de facto mental health counselors. They distributed donations and fended off conspiracy theorists who approached the church with cameras claiming that the shooting was a hoax. They were so busy that their family frayed. At one point, their five surviving children told them: “‘We didn’t just lose Annabelle, we lost y’all too,’” Sherri said.

The Pomeroys said they struggled to help their family and friends through a tragedy that had occurred when they were out of town. They said they wondered if they could have saved their daughter if they had been at the church that day—and they questioned why God would allow her to be killed while sparing them.

Last year, the couple decided they would step away from church leadership, sell their things, and move into a camper to travel. It was time to let themselves heal.

All around them on their final day leading the congregation were the survivors. The worship band performed as it always had, with Kris Workman at the helm. Guitar propped on his lap, legs settled on his wheelchair’s footrests, he bellowed the lyrics: “Death is swallowed up forever by the fury of your love.”

David Colbath sat a few rows from the front, smiling with his eyes closed as he held hands with his wife, Sheri Kay Colbath. In the back, John Holcombe fiddled with his computer, monitoring the church services’ various live streams online, smiling as Evelyn rushed by him with three other girls. They made their way to the front of the pews where she knelt and prayed.

Morgan Workman sat just behind Holcombe, still working the sound booth as she had on the day of the shooting, singing with the worship band despite another debilitating migraine that sliced through her head. Beside her was her sister Colbey Workman, who had been told for years that the paralysis of her husband, Kris, would prevent them from having children.

But there she sat, her hand on a round belly—their “little miracle,” she called it. The due date: Nov. 5, 2022, five years to the day after the shooting. Ronen Anthony Rivas Workman was born five days early.

“If you go through awful and can only see awful, then you’re going to never move forward,” Morgan Workman said. “The only way you’re able to move forward and make that progress is to look and see what good we’re able to still have.”

A version of this story originally appeared in The Washington Post. *Used with permission.*

The Puzzle Page

Crossword No. 691: Family History by Matt Gaffney

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14					■	15				■	16			
17					18					■	19			
20			■	21					■	22				
■	■	■	23						24					
25	26	27					■	28				■	■	■
29				■	■	■	30				■	31	32	33
34				35	36	37					38			
39			■	40				■	■	■	41			
■	■	■	42				■	43	44	45				
46	47	48					49					■	■	■
50					■	51					■	52	53	54
55				■	56						57			
58				■	59				■	60				
61				■	62				■	63				

ACROSS

1 Occupy, as a table
6 "No thanks"
10 Afternoon recharges
14 Neighbor of British Columbia
15 Maker of moisturizers
16 Fire ___ (dramatic gemstone)
17 Rahul Gandhi, a member of the famed Indian family, was controversially removed from his parliamentary seat on March 23 for this crime against Prime Minister Modi
19 ___ *Croft: Tomb Raider*
20 Gobble up
21 Woodworking tool
22 Enrico for whom an element is named
23 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi received praise in 1971 for backing independence for this region, which soon became the country of Bangladesh
25 "You're not allowed to do that!" retort
28 Clickable links
29 ___ *v Ferrari*
30 Plant used in lotions
31 Choose (to)
34 Mahatma Gandhi's 1869 birth date, now a national holiday in India and also the U.N. International Day of Non-Violence
39 Peacenik Yoko
40 "___ We Got Fun"
41 "Encore!"
42 Not much, as of hair cream
43 Showbiz magazine
46 Rajiv Gandhi served as prime minister in 1984–89 after a career as one of these
50 *The ___ Witch Project*
51 Enveloping glows
52 Org. with ring matches
55 Helper
56 Sonia Gandhi, the now 76-year-old widow of Rajiv, was born and raised outside of this European city that hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics
58 Abel's brother
59 "___ be all right!"
60 Spine-tingling
61 Wedding day "trade"
62 Visa rival, briefly
63 Highway exits

DOWN

1 Team
2 Brainstorm result
3 President from Cincinnati
4 "It's all so clear now!"
5 Meowing male
6 Potential latke
7 Walk with ___ (hobble)
8 South America's largest city
9 Thesaurus entry (abbr.)
10 To boot
11 *Things Fall ___*
12 European province famed for cheese
13 Killed, in the Bible
18 "Let me add another thing..."
22 ___-O-Fish
23 Prefix meaning "internal"
24 Ray of fast-food fame
25 "Were that to happen..."
26 Director Ethan or Joel
27 Music sheet word
30 To the back of the plane
31 Haunting instrument
32 Suave alternative
33 Deuce beater
35 Low point
36 Primatologist Fossey
37 Best-selling 2005 Zadie Smith novel
38 Leave out
42 Hit film sequel of 1986
43 Manly
44 Turing or Cumming
45 More optimistic
46 Counting devices
47 Trojan War tale
48 Device with dials
49 Does some knitting
52 Toasty
53 Radar screen sound
54 "The ___ have it"
56 Only three-letter element
57 Jasmine or Darjeeling, say

The Week Contest

This week's question: Swedish scientists have found that they can effectively treat women with social anxiety by exposing them to other people's armpit sweat. If this treatment for anxiety were turned into a commercial product, what should it be called?

Last week's contest: A recent study concluded that corny "dad jokes" help teach children how to cope with embarrassment. Come up with a term for the beneficial psychological effect of exposure to a pun-loving, shame-proof dad.

THE WINNER: "Nerd Immunity"
John Bregoli, Weymouth, Mass.

SECOND PLACE: "Cringe Benefits"
Ken Liebman, Williston, Vt.

THIRD PLACE: "Père-annoy-ya"
Bruce Carlson, Alexandria, Va.

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, please type "Anxiety scent" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, April 11. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, April 14. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

THE WEEK
Out of the shadows

◀ **The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.**

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: super-hard

7					1	6		
	4					8	3	
		8					1	5
			7		9			6
				8				
1			2		6			
6	9					3		
	7	3					4	
		2	5					7

Find the solutions to all *The Week*'s puzzles online: **www.theweek.com/puzzle.**

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